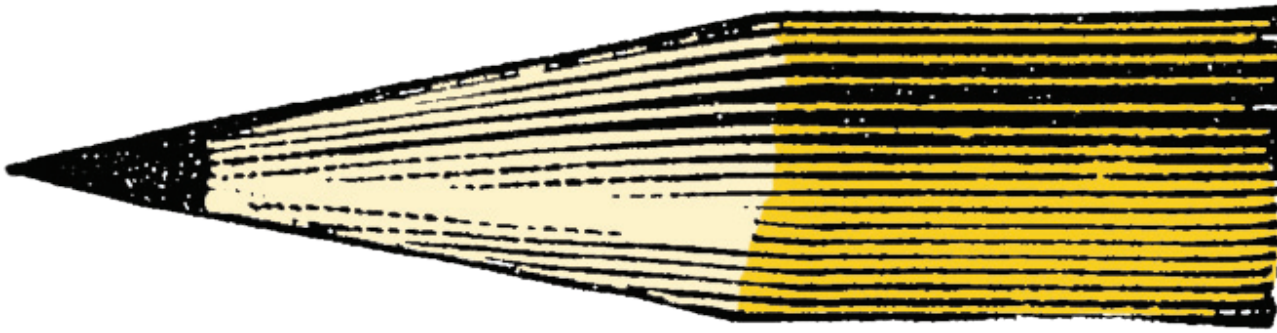
GUIDEBOOK TO THE

CALIFORNIA *school climate* SURVEY

FOR TEACHERS & STAFF



PART II: SURVEY CONTENT

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Foreword

The California Department of Education is ramping up its efforts to close the persistent achievement gap that exists between our white students and our students of color, as well as gaps with our English learners, poor students, and students with disabilities. The California School Climate Survey (CSCS) for staff, and the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) for students, are two tools designed to help us in this effort. We have incorporated new, pointed questions about cultural climate in these surveys to attain a better understanding of the environment in our schools and the supports our students need to achieve.

We know that students are more likely to do well in school if they feel supported and understood by their teachers and peers, and we know that teachers are more likely to be effective if they understand and can relate to the diverse cultures of students in their classroom. These surveys provide critical data that can help guide the fostering of the absolute best learning and working environments in our schools. I encourage all districts to closely examine their CHKS/CSCS results to help improve their school environments for all students and all staff.

— Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Preface

The *California School Climate Survey* (CSCS), along with its companion survey of students, the *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CHKS), constitute the largest effort in the nation to provide local schools and communities with data assessing their school climates and the needs of students and staff to guide efforts to improve schools, foster student achievement and well-being, and retain quality teachers. This data collection system is a service provided by the California Department of Education (CDE), which requires administration of both surveys by local education agencies (LEAs) every two years in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). As NCLB also requires the data to be publicly reported, the results are posted annually on the CSCS website each November (www.wested.org/cscs).

This Guide discusses each question (item) in the CSCS by topic area. It is designed to help users better understand their survey results and use them in school improvement efforts to meet the needs of both students and staff. As each question is discussed, referral is made to the table numbers in the Main CSCS Report, as well as the question numbers in the Online Report. The index at the back provides a cross-walk between question numbers and table numbers. The References section provides citations for all the research studies and other documents cited in the text.

The questions are discussed topically in the following sections:

1. Sample Characteristics
2. Learning and Working Environment
3. Developmental Supports and Opportunities
4. Respect, Cultural Sensitivity, and the Achievement Gap
5. Learning Engagement and Readiness
6. Student Violence, Harassment, and Substance Use
7. Discipline and Counseling
8. Learning Supports Module: Student Services and Policies
9. Special Education Supports Module

This Guide should be used along with two other resource tools which are available to help you understand, analyze, and disseminate the survey results and use them to guide school and program improvements:

- The CHKS ***Data Use and Dissemination Guidebook*** describes a step-by-step process for reviewing, analyzing, and disseminating survey results as part of a data-driven decision making process. Although its focus is student self-report data, its recommendations and guidelines are applicable as well for this CSCS staff data.
- A ***Workbook for Improving School Climate and Closing the Achievement Gap*** is a strengths-based practical guide for busy teachers and administrators to using their CHKS/CSCS data for improving the school climate and promoting academic achievement and well-being among all students. Focusing on issues related to race/

ethnicity, migrant education, and special education, it includes examples of how to use the data to improve practice and policy. A workshop accompanying this Workbook is available.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To be in compliance with NCLB, CDE requires Local Education Agencies (LEAs) administer both the CSCS and CHKS at least once every two years, in close proximity. A local coordinator plans, schedules, and monitors the CSCS using detailed instructions provided by CDE. To keep costs and local effort to a minimum, staff complete the survey online. The survey must be completed in one session, at the end of which results are submitted.

The survey's target sample (those asked to take the survey) consists of all certificated staff in grades 5 through 12, as well as all other personnel in the areas of health, prevention, and safety, from among all schools participating in the CHKS (approximately 7,000 schools in over 800 districts). This is necessary to obtain a large enough sample to have confidence that the results are truly representative (i.e., valid and not biased) and to maintain anonymity. Other (e.g., classified) staff are also welcome to take the survey at the district's discretion. ***Staff participation, however, is voluntary***. Staff are not required to take the survey.

SURVEY INFORMATION

For more information about the survey or your results, call the toll-free helpline at 888.841.7536, or visit the CSCS website at http:/www.wested.org/cscs.

Acknowledgements

The California School Climate Survey (CSCS) for school staff is a project of the California Department of Education's Coordinated School Health & Safety Office. WestEd, under contract to CDE (#CN066334), developed and conducts the survey, with the assistance of Duerr Evaluation Resources. Special acknowledgement should be made of the contribution of Mark Duerr in developing the instrument and Jerry Bailey in developing and managing the online data collection system. Hilva Chan, the CDE project officer, provided invaluable advice that improved this report. Special acknowledgement should also be given to the support and leadership provided by Meredith Rolfe, former administrator, and Tom Herman, the current administrator of SHKPO. For further information about the survey, visit cscs.wested.org.

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Abbreviations and Definitions

CDE	California Department of Education
API	Academic Performance Index (a weighted, composite measure of a school's academic performance based on annual student subject-specific scores on California standards-based tests and other indicators)
CHKS	California Healthy Kids Survey
CS	Continuation High School (a nontraditional school for youth who have not been succeeding in traditional high schools because of academic or behavioral problems)
CSCS	California School Climate Survey
ES	Elementary School (grades K-6, as well as K-8 schools)
HS	High School (grades 9-12)
MS	Middle School (grades 7-8, excluding K-8 schools)
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
Practitioners	School staff who answered the questions on the survey intended only for staff with responsibilities involving counseling, prevention (e.g., substance use, violence, bullying), safety, and health
Traditional School	Comprehensive elementary, middle, or high school, in contrast to a nontraditional continuation school
Learning Barriers	In this document the term "learning barriers" refers to situations, events, and states of being beyond the student's control that may adversely affect learning (e.g. hunger, violence, lack of resources, irrelevant curriculum, etc.).

Introduction

This Guide is designed to help educators and their community collaborators understand and use the results of the *California School Climate Survey* (CSCS). It provides a discussion of each question in the survey, organized in topics, including why it is asked and how the data will help schools improve the school climate and student and staff engagement, performance, and well-being.[1] It aims to raise awareness of the characteristics of an effective school climate and why fostering these characteristics needs to be an essential part of school improvement efforts. It aims to help survey users see the connections across the questions and between the CSCS and its companion *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CHKS) for students. Comparing staff perceptions with the self-reported behaviors, attitudes, and experiences reported by students enhances the value of both surveys as tools for school improvement. This Guide is also designed to be used along with the *Workbook for Improving School Climate and Closing the Achievement Gap*, which provides practical steps for using data to close the race/ethnic achievement gap and meet the needs of migrant and special education students. In this Introduction, we provide an overview to the survey purpose, content, and reporting system, the organization of the Guide, and why assessing and improving school climate is so important.

SURVEY PURPOSE

The CSCS was developed in 2004 for the California Department of Education (CDE), Coordinated School Health & Safety Office, to fulfill the requirement in the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 Title IV that schools conduct an anonymous teacher survey of incidences, prevalence, and attitudes related to drug use and violence. Recognizing the opportunity this survey presented, CDE expanded the content to collect data to guide school improvement efforts in general, and also made it possible for districts to add questions of their own choosing so that they survey could better meet local data needs.[2] A third broad goal was to provide data comparable to student self-report information from the CHKS.

The CSCS (as well as CHKS) grew out of CDE's commitment to promoting the successful cognitive, social, and emotional development of all the state's youth; to fostering positive school working environments for staff; to closing the race/ethnicity achievement gap; and to accountability and data-driven school reform. It gathers information from school staff that, in conjunction with CHKS student data, enriches a school's ability to create an engaging learning and teaching environment that promotes quality teaching, student academic achievement, and well-being among both students and staff. The CSCS is intended to help address this information need. Through CSCS results, CDE hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of school climate in improving the academic performance of California youth. The CSCS seeks, in a relatively short survey, to supply a broad range of data to help guide the implementation of effective school reform.

The results of this survey are confidential and are not used to rate schools. The survey provides staff with an opportunity to communicate their honest perceptions about the school without repercussions for themselves or the school. The data are provided to districts to guide their own efforts to improve schools and better meet the needs of students and staff.

1 The References at the end of the document provide citations for all the research studies and other documents cited in the text.

2 The survey was developed under contract by WestEd with the assistance of Duerr Evaluation Resources. There is no charge for conducting the survey but a fee is applied for adding custom questions or any data analysis that districts request.

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

In 2004, the survey content and reporting system was further expand in response to growing concerns over the state's persistent racial/ethnic Achievement Gap and the need for better information to help other underperforming or academically-challenged groups. The gap in achievement between white students and other ethnic groups, as well as between English Learners and native English Speakers, socioeconomically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities is a pervasive issue in many, if not all, of California's schools. These achievement gaps are a fact that California simply cannot afford to accept—morally, economically or socially.

Towards that effort, in February 2007, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, announced an initiative to Close the Achievement Gap (CTAG) and charged CDE's advisory California P-16 Council to provide recommendations on what the State can do differently to assist local education agencies in closing the achievement gap. The P-16 Council[3] identified and recommended that "School Culture and Climate" be one of the four thematic areas of focus in addressing the achievement gap. This recommendation was based on the understanding that a school's culture and climate, and ultimately a student's learning and a teacher's teaching, occurs within the context of the values, beliefs, and rituals of the school, community and larger society. With respect to culture and climate, the P-16 Council specifically recommended that schools and districts: (1) provide culturally relevant professional development for all school personnel; and (2) conduct a climate survey.

Following this recommendation an advisory committee of researchers, WestEd staff, and CDE staff was established and charged with revising the CSCS and CHKS to include more questions to support efforts to close the race-ethnicity Achievement Gap, as well as to provide better data to meet the needs of students in the migrant and special education programs. To further support these initiative, throughout this guide, the relevance of a question to CTAG efforts is emphasized. Section IV is particularly important in this regard, discussing the questions related to equity, diversity, and cultural relevance. Districts whose respondents meet report criteria (see below), further receive supplementary reports disaggregating survey results by race/ethnicity and involvement in special education and migrant education programs.

These revised surveys, when used together and wisely, provide teachers, schools, and districts with valuable information to help improve school climate and culture in the context of closing the achievement gap. They are tools to help identify, confront, and change the conditions in our schools that are holding groups of students back academically and developmentally. Among other things the data contributes to an understanding of the educational experience of underperforming students; informs continuous improvement of teaching, leadership, and organizational practices; and leads to new insights, awareness, and future actions that ultimately extend policies and practices that work for all and/or eliminate those that disaffect certain group.

3 The California P-16 Council is a high level, statewide assembly of educators from preschool, K-12, higher education, business, philanthropy, and community leaders appointed by Superintendent O'Connell and chaired by Dr. Barry Munitz. The Council is charged with developing strategies to better coordinate, integrate, and improve education for preschool through college students.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

What do we mean by school climate?

School climate is a broad term with different dimensions. Most commonly it refers to the conditions or quality of the learning environment — as created by the community of people involved, their values, beliefs, and interpersonal relationships, and the physical setting itself — that affect the subjective school experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and performance of both students and staff. According to Cohen et al. (2009):

> *School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. However, school climate is more than individual experience: It is a group phenomenon that is larger than any one person's experience. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe.*

School-climate researchers emphasize the capacity of schools to make a difference in helping students to succeed. As evidence, they point to high-achieving schools that manage to "beat the odds," doing better than other similarly challenged schools, many of them located in the most racially segregated and economically depressed urban areas. The goal of school climate research is to determine the factors within schools that account for such success and that motivate teachers to teach and students to learn.[4]

A growing body of research attests that school climate factors can influence the cognitive, social, and psychological development of students directly and also indirectly as they influence school administrators, teachers, and other staff.[5] They have been related to school connectedness and learning engagement (academic aspirations), student attendance, classroom behavior, discipline problems, suspension rates, and academic performance, including standardized test scores.[6] As Jones et al. (2008) concluded, echoing Klem and Connell (2004):

> *Regardless of how it has been defined over the years, to a greater or less extent, all research on school climate finds a positive correlation between better school climate and increased student learning and achievement.*

What are the key characteristics of a positive school climate?

When we speak of a positive school climate what do we mean? One way to conceptualize it is in terms of two goals. First, it motivates or engages students in learning and staff in teaching. Second, it strives to create conditions that eliminate learning barriers that face so many students and, as a result, their schools. School climate research typically seeks to identify the learning barriers that may impact a school and determine whether the school has the learning supports in place to address these barriers. "Learning supports" is the term usually used to refer to the resources, strategies, and practices that foster the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development that enables all students to achieve in school.

4 Esposito 1999; Hoy et al. 2002; McEvoy & Walter 2000; Reynolds & Creemers 1990; Silins & Murray-Harvey 2000; Johnson et al. 2007; Kelley et al. 2005; Welsh 2001.

5 Anderson 1982; Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie 1997; Hoy & Sabo 1998; Perkins 2006; Roach et al. 2004; Silins & Murray-Harvey 2000; Stewart 2003; Welsh et al. 1999; Wilcox & Clayton 2001.

6 Benninga et al. 2003; Berkowitz & Bier 2005; Brand et al. 2003; Cohen 2006; Cohen & Pickeral 2007; Furlong et al. 2004; Luiselli, Putnam, & Handler 2005; Plucker 1998; Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom 2006.

Within this context, a consensus is emerging on the fundamental conditions for meeting these goals. A positive school climate is one that meets the developmental needs of students without which learning cannot occur. It is supportive, safe, caring, challenging, and participatory.[7] To the extent that students feel safe, cared for, appropriately supported, "lovingly pushed" to learn, in the words of Cohen et al. (2009), they develop a sense of autonomy, competence, and belonging.[8] This leads to improvements in school connectedness, learning engagement, attendance, classroom behavior, academic aspirations, and, ultimately, performance. These conditions are also associated with reductions in health risk behaviors such as substance abuse and violence that are barriers to learning.[9] Cohen et al. (2009) conceptualize school climate in terms of four dimensions: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the external or physical environment, as shown in Exhibit 1. The CSCS addresses each of these critical conditions.

As discussed further in Sections II and III, three inter-related developmental supports in the school environment measured by the CSCS and CHKS have been identified as especially important, working in concert: *caring adult relationships, supportive high expectations*, and *opportunities for meaningful participation*. Resilience research has shown these three external factors are highly associated with positive educational, health, social, and developmental outcomes. The research on promoting achievement particularly emphasizes the need for two conditions: (1) a sense of the school as a caring, supportive community characterized by positive relationships among and between teachers, students, and parents; and (2) a culture rooted in high achievement expectations and standards. Both are important. One the one hand, research indicates that students who have a high sense of community may be more motivated to abide by the norms and values emphasized by the school and thus perform and behave better.[10] On the other hand, as Lee and Smith (1999) argue, without a clear school-wide cultural emphasis on academic excellence among school staff, fostering a sense of community in itself is not enough to produce academic achievement gains among students. Combined, caring relationships and high expectations, along with quality pedagogy, appear to be the linchpins of a positive school climate that promotes achievement. Thus, most school climate research focuses on how teacher-student relationships and/or teacher expectations for student performance affect students' own perceptions of their capability and motivation to learn, and ultimately their performance. In this regard, among the most disconcerting results of the CSCS and CHKS overall is that, as students age, traditional schools become less caring and have lower academic expectations.

Exhibit 1. Four Dimensions of School Climate (from Cohen et al. 2009)

- Safety: The perceived safety of students and staff and the degree to which the school is perceived as a safe place to attend – both physically and socio-emotionally – and conducive to learning.
- Teaching and Learning: Adults want all students to do their best and believe they can succeed and the school emphasizes teaching lessons in ways relevant to students and provides material, resources and training staff need.

7 Blum et al. 2002; Cohen et al. 2009; Eccles et al 1993; Anderson 1982.

8 See, for example: Brookover et al. 1977; Brookover & Lezotte 1979; Edmonds 1979; Freiberg 1999; Good & Weinstein 1986; Gottfredson & Gottfredson 1989; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee 1989; Haynes, Emmons & Ben-Avie 1997; Lee & Smith 1999; Madaus, Airasian, & Kellaghan, 1980; McNeely et al., 2002; Newell & Van Ryzin 2007; Rutter, 1983; Rutter et al., 1979; Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom, 2006; Shipman, 1981; Whitlock, 2006.

9 Anderson 1982; Benninga 2003; Blum et al. 2002; Catalano et al. 2004; Eccles et al. 1993; Rumberger 1987; Wu et al 1982; DeJung et al. 1986.

10 Benard 2004; Battistich, Schaps & Wilson 2004; Schaps 2003; Zins et al. 2004.

» Relationships: Adults really care about students; listen and pay attention to them. This includes fostering a respect for diversity, school-community collaboration, school connectedness, and high staff and student morale.

» Environmental-structural: The school has clean and well-maintained facilities and property, an inviting aesthetic quality and curricular and extracurricular offerings.

The importance of school climate in school reform

School climate or culture remains, in the words of Jerald (2006), "the hidden curriculum" and "possibly the least discussed element in practical conversations about how to improve student achievement." School reform strategies have primarily focused on improving academic curriculum, instruction, and governance. While such changes are often essential, they are also often not sufficient in themselves for turning around low-performing schools because they largely ignore the school climate and the related learning barriers that can impede students motivation and ability to benefit from any improvements in instruction or curriculum.[11] Put in other words, too often school reform efforts focus on the "whats" and "things" of education, which Cuban (1995) refers to as "the official curriculum," and not enough on how the teacher teaches or the school climate and conditions that ensure all students are ready and motivated to learn. As De La Ossa (2005) admonished, "Although schools can make structural changes, until schools address underlying beliefs and perceptions, the educational system is failing our youth and society" (see also Yero 2002).

The National Research Council (2004:14), in its seminal study on Engaging Schools, stresses the links between academic achievement, learning engagement, and developmentally supportive school climates:

> *Research on motivation and engagement is essential to understanding some of the most fundamental and vexing challenges of school reform.…Increasing motivation and engagement is unlikely to be accomplished by simple policy prescriptions, such as raising standards, promoting accountability, or increasing school funding, although these may be helpful in the right set of circumstances.*

The Council adds that the fundamental challenge to school reform is to create "a set of circumstances [a school climate] in which students take pleasure in learning," see value and meaning in it, and "that they can reasonably expect to be able to learn the material." For many, this may depend on a "confluence of supports." Further, they observe:

> *Although learning involves cognitive processes that take place within and between the individuals, motivation to learn depends on a student's involvement in a web of social relationships….It is not coincidental that many of the qualities associated with engaging schools also have been found to foster healthy youth development."*

Similarly, Gordon (2006) wrote:

> *"Despite all the talk about upgrading public schools for the 21st century, most of the resulting strategies are based on an ongoing cycle of curricular revisions and new testing plans. The engagement levels of students, the interaction between students and teachers, and the importance of teachers and principal to student performance have been largely ignored."*

He maintains that we have been too oriented toward top-down directed, enforcement systems, and technical changes to instruction, and that we need to be focused more on maximizing human potential within schools by raising engagement levels among students and staff, by getting the most out of people who work and learn there. High

11 Adelman & Taylor 1998, 2007; Adelman et al. 2005; Cohen et al. 2009; Perkins 2006.

quality, he stresses, must come about "on the ground." Too often it is assumed that students are performing poorly simply because of a lack of expectations, which does little to combat the all-to-common lack of engagement.

In this regard, the Learning First Alliance (2001), among others, expresses concern that the focus on higher standards in today's schools is crowding out attention to the fundamental need for a safe and supportive environment – without which schools cannot meet the goal of educating all children well, ensuring their healthy development, and preparing them for a bright and productive future.

School Climate and Quality Teaching

Equally important is how engaged and supported are teachers. "The same motivation principles that apply to student engagement are relevant to teachers as well," the National Research Council (2004) also concluded. As discussed in Section II, research in California and elsewhere has suggested that workplace conditions and school climate factors are highly correlated to teacher attrition rates, and may be as important or even more important to teacher retention as salary (Futernick 2007; Gordon 2006). How teachers and other staff perceive their schools, and the challenges they face, as measured by the CSCS, are critically important information to help foster staff members' motivation and commitment to the school, and, as a results, to help create positive learning environments for students.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

There are many ways to measure school climate. The elements that comprise it are complex, ranging from the quality of teacher interactions to noise levels in hallways, physical structure, safety, size, etc. (Freiberg 1998). Because of the desire to keep the CSCS short (in part to encourage staff participation), it cannot assess all the school climate factors that have been related to student achievement, well-being, and school improvement. The questions were selected with the assistance of an advisory committee to assess the key variables that research and theory indicated are most associated with a positive school climate and successful learning and teaching engagement, as explained further in this report. To gather information on the learning environment, the CSCS (as do most school climate surveys) focuses on individual behaviors and patterns of communication and interactions. To fulfill NCLB requirements, it provides data on substance abuse, violence, and other risk behaviors that have been shown to be barriers to learning. Two other goals were to collect data that are not otherwise available to schools and that could be compared to the student information provided by the California Healthy Kids Survey.

Most of the questions on the survey fall into three types categories. They ask staff to indicate: (1) how much they agree that a statement characterized their school; (2) the proportion of staff that did or felt a certain thing (all, most, some, etc.); or (3) how much of some service, program, or practice occurred at school (a lot, some, etc.).

In addition, the questions are divided into three modules. The first Core section is answered by all staff. Two additional modules target staff with responsibilities for learning supports and special education. These group-specific modules provide more program- and issue-related information that might not be known to other staff members. Users should keep in mind that they are answered only by sub-samples of all respondents.

Core Survey (Section 1)

All staff answer the questions in the first part of the survey. It begins by asking for background information about the characteristics of the staff that completed the survey, including the respondent's role at school (e.g., teacher,

administrator, counselor, nurse), length of service at school and in the profession, and race/ethnicity (See Section 1). It then assesses the following domains that research has linked to positive school climates:

- How supportive and inviting is the learning and working environment in general (Tables 2.1 and 2.6).
- School norms, standards, and expectations that promote achievement, including the rigor and relevance of instruction, shared sense of responsibility for school improvement, and parent involvement (Tables 2.2-2.5, 2.7).
- Supports, professional respect, and collegiality in the working environment among staff (Tables 2.5-2.10).
- Staff professional development needs (Tables 2.12-16; 3.10, 4.10-4.13).
- Staff and student safety (2.17-2.18).
- Facilities maintenance and parent involvement (Tables 2.19-2.20).
- Student developmental supports — caring staff-student relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation and decision making— in the school environment that resilience research has linked to school (and life) success (3.1-3.10).
- Equity, respect, and cultural sensitivity, particularly germane for closing the achievement gap (4.1-4.13).
- Student behaviors that facilitate learning, including how much students are ready and motivated to learn and are well-behaved (Tables 5.1-5.8).
- The level of problems the school experiences related to fourteen student behaviors or conditions (e.g., truancy, violence, bullying, substance use, mental health, and physical health) (Tables 6.1-6.8).
- The nature, communication, and enforcement of discipline-related rules/policies (Tables 7.1-7.5).

Taken as a whole, these questions map to three pillars emphasized by many school reform efforts — Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. They assess the basic developmental supports and opportunities needed to promote academic success that resilience research has identified. They assess variables linked to retaining quality teachers and they explore issues related to race/ethnicity to help support the state's efforts to close the achievement gap, as noted above. And they provide data comparable to school climate measures on the CHKS student survey to determine how consistent are staff and student perceptions.

Learning Supports Module (LSM)

The Learning Supports Module (Tables 8.1-8.24) consists of 23 questions that are answered only by "practitioners" who provide services or instruction related to health, prevention, discipline, safety, or counseling. These questions assess the level of student programs, supports, services, and teacher professional development. The results can be compared to the level of need as indicated by staff perceptions (from the first section of the CSCS) and student perceptions (from the CHKS).

Special Education Supports Module (SESM)

The Special Education Supports Module (Tables 9.1-9.25) consists of 24 questions designed to be answered only by staff who have responsibilities for teaching or providing related support services to students with Individualized

Education Programs (IEPs). It provides data to better understand issues involving: (1) effectively meeting the needs of student with IEPs; and (2) recruiting and retaining special education instructors. The CDE Division of Special Education is providing special reports to districts that compare all the CSCS results as reported by staff with special education responsibilities versus other staff.

CSCS REPORTS

Users receive their CSCS results in several ways. If administered online, they first receive the results immediately over the Internet, question by question in survey order. Later they receive a *Main Report* consisting of tables organized by topic. Currently, CDE is also supporting the preparation of two types of supplementary reports related to special populations. This Guide provides referral to both the table numbers in the main and supplemental reports and the question numbers used to report the results on the online version. To facilitate use in both versions, it includes a cross-walk between question numbers and table numbers.

Main Report

In the Main Report tables results are presented side-by-side for the three traditional school types — elementary (grades 1-6), middle (grades 7-8), and high schools (grades 9-12) — as well as for nontraditional continuation schools that serve students at risk of school failure because of academic or behavioral problems (upgraded, with 16 years being the earliest age of admittance).[12] In the tables, the percentages are rounded off to the nearest full percent. The main CSCS Report tables are especially useful for examining differences in school climate perceptions between the major types of schools.

Supplemental Reports

Beyond the main report of overall CSCS findings from all staff, CDE is currently providing districts with sufficient samples with three additional supplemental reports disaggregating their results by staff based on their race/ethnicity and by whether they have responsibilities for migrant education or special education, compared to other staff[13]. These reports are discussed further in Section 1, Sample Characteristics.

COMPARING RESULTS

Comparing district results to other local, regional, and state data provides a broader context with which to assess the local situation. Such comparisons can help you determine whether your district results are unique or may be part of a larger trend. All district CSCS reports are being posted publicly on the survey website, as well as aggregated statewide results (see below). Ultimately, however, the most fundamental concern should not be how you compare with others or the state but your own satisfaction with the survey results and what they tell you about the functioning of the schools in your district.

Statewide Findings

In discussing question significance in this Guide, references are frequently made in this Guide to the aggregated statewide findings from the first two-years of CSCS administration in 2004-06, as reported by Austin and Bailey

12 For reporting purposes, K-8 schools are coded as elementary.

13 CSCS supplemental reports disaggregate results by staff race/ethnicity are only provide if the CHKS CTAG module is administered.

(2008). This report provided the first state norms for comparison to local results.[14] The following summarizes the key findings.

Between elementary and high school, staff perceptions that most or nearly all students are motivated to learn declined by one-third, and the perception that truancy is a problem increased seven-fold.[15] Underlying these findings, almost all indicators of a positive school climate declined between elementary and high school. For example, by high school:

- Only 40% of staff strongly agreed that their high school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn and reported that nearly all adults want all students to do their best.
- Only about one-third strongly agreed that: (1) their high school sets high standards for academic performance, promotes academic success for all students, is a safe place for students, and is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work; and (2) also reported that nearly all adults really cared about students and acknowledge and pay attention to them.
- Only about one-fifth reported nearly all adults listen to what students have to say and believe every student can be a success.
- Only one-tenth strongly agreed the classroom provides opportunities for student decision-making.

Student Learning Barriers and Supports. The problems posed to the school by student risk behaviors and health-related problems increased with student age. Learning supports and programs designed to address these barriers consistently declined between elementary and high school.

Staff Working Conditions. Only about one-third to one-half of staff — again with the lowest percentage in high schools — strongly agreed that the school was a supportive and inviting place to work, that it was also a safe place for staff, and that nearly all their colleagues supported and treated each other with respect.

School Climate and Academic Performance. To shed further light on the relationship between a positive school climate and student achievement, Austin and Bailey (2008) examined how variances in 2004-06 CSCS results were related to state 2005 API scores, with schools categorized as performing high, medium, and low.[16] A factor analysis identified that the majority of survey items in that version of the CSCS factored into five scales assessing Positive School Norms and Standards (academic focus, degree school seen as supportive and participatory, staff collegiality, parent involvement), Positive Staff-Student Relationships, Student Behaviors that Facilitated Learning (motivation and learning readiness indicators), Safety (perceived safety and lack of violent behaviors), and Lack of AOD Use. As API scores increased, so did the proportion of schools that were high on each of these scales. The largest difference across scales between high and low API categories was associated with Student Facilitative Behavior (see Section 4). That is, of all six scales, it had the lowest percentages in the low API category and the highest percentages in

14 Updated tables are available on the CSCS website: www.wested.org/cscs

15 Here staff and student data are consistent, as CHKS (2008) data show that truancy almost triples between 7th and 11th grade, and high levels of school connectedness decline by almost half between 5th and 9th grade (from 59% to 33%).

16 The API is a composite measure of a school's academic performance and the cornerstone of the state's accountability system. It is a weighted index based on a school's annual student subject-specific scores on California standards-based tests and other indicators.

the high API category. This underscores the importance of promoting student engagement, readiness, and positive behavior, as measured by this scale, as part of school improvement efforts.

This pattern held across scales among the traditional schools, with the variation between the top and bottom third of API schools much greater for elementary than high schools. This reflects the overall decline in positive schools climate indicators in high schools noted in the report. The biggest contrast among the scales in the API comparison was for substance use. Less than 10% of schools in each of the three API levels were in the top third for low levels of substance use as a problem to the school, providing support for the association between substance use and achievement in high schools. In this regard, the decline in services and supports that occur in high school — at a time when their need is greatest — is disconcerting.

DATA CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCESS

The individual district results are intended primarily for the district's own use to guide program decision-making and school improvement efforts. All results are anonymous and confidential. No results are reported if there are less than five respondents per grade level. It is CDE's policy that no CSCS data be made publicly available until the districts receive their results and have time to review and release them publicly. All district staff, researchers, and other individuals receiving CSCS data must sign a Data Memorandum of Understanding to preserve confidentiality and not release data without district coordination. NCLB does require that the district make the results publicly available. To that end, CDE posts the results on the CSCS website the year following their being reported to the districts. In addition, all the results are aggregated in a statewide database available for analysis under conditions that preserve the confidentiality of the data.[17]

ASSESSING THE DATA

Care must be taken to fully understand the survey, the context within which the data were collected, and the factors that can impact the quality, validity, and generalizability of the results. The following are a few of the key issues that should be kept in mind. A detailed discussion occurs in the *CHKS Data Use and Dissemination Guidebook*.

The findings reflect the *perceptions* of staff, which may not necessarily be *the* reality of schools. Many staff may have reasons to make their school look good; others, to paint an overly negative picture. The perceptions of staff may be very different from those of students — or from an independent observer of the school. This is one reason why it is important to compare CSCS results to those from students in the CHKS. Nevertheless, staff perceptions reflect *a reality* in themselves that is important and can influence both staff and student performance.

The Importance of High Staff Participation

Among the most important factors affecting the quality of survey results is the level of staff participation. The representativeness of survey data is affected by the percentage of the sample that completed the survey (the respondents). The higher the average staff response (participation) rate, the more confidence you can have that the results reflect all staff and are not possibly a biased reflection of staff who are particularly motivated to take the survey because of very positive or negative experiences at a school. Statewide, the average response rate in 2004-06

17 Researchers interested in analyzing the dataset should contact their local CHKS technical assistance center by calling 888.841.7536. A written Memorandum of Understanding specifying the conditions under which data will be analyzed must be agreed upon with CDE and WestEd.

was disappointing — ranging from 39% (high schools) to 48% (elementary) among traditional schools. In part, this reflects that this was the first years that the survey was administered and staff participation is voluntary. These response rates are consistent, even compare variably, with other voluntary teacher and staff surveys, but schools should strive for at least a 60% response rate. Even if your response rate is poor, the results provide an indication of what those staff who did respond felt about the school.

Increasing Survey Participation. The *CSCS Administration Guidebook* provides strategies for improving participation, but one of the most important is raising awareness among staff of the value of the survey to the school and the administrations desire to obtain their input. To that end, it is important that staff are informed about the results and any school-improvement efforts the district is undertaken in response. *Staff must perceive that their voice is heard and valued.*

NEXT STEPS IN DATA ANALYSES AND ASSESSMENT

Receipt of your CSCS report is only the first step of a data-driven decision making process. Two resource tools are available to help you understand, analyze, and disseminate the survey results and use them to guide school and program improvements.

- The CHKS ***Data Use and Dissemination Guidebook*** describes a step-by-step process for reviewing, analyzing, and disseminating survey results as part of a data-driven decision making process. Although its focus is student self-report data, its recommendations and guidelines are applicable as well for this CSCS staff data.
- A ***Workbook for Improving School Climate and Closing the Achievement Gap*** is a strengths-based practical guide for busy teachers and administrators to using their CHKS/CSCS data for improving the school climate and promoting academic achievement and well-being among all students. Focusing on issues related to race/ethnicity, migrant education, and special education, it includes examples of how to use the data to improve practice and policy. A workshop accompanying this Workbook is available.

The following describes actions you can take to further analyze your results and obtain additional information.

Analyze Your Dataset

Your complete dataset is available electronically for additional analysis (there is a small fee for preparation). The dataset enables analyses of patterns in the results, how they are interrelated, and how they vary by different subgroups of staff and across schools within the district. This will help target programs to those in most need. To assist in this, suggestions for further analyses are provided periodically throughout this report. If you need support in analyzing these data, consider contacting researchers at local health agencies and colleges. Involving analysts outside the school can further promote better school-community collaboration in meeting youth needs. Data analysis assistance is also available from the CHKS/CSCS staff as a custom service.

Request School Level Reports

CDE supports the preparation of one printed district-level report. If the schools in your district vary significantly in demographics, programs, or other characteristics, consider requesting individual reports for each school. Different schools may have different problems that require different programs and strategies. (Note that for large districts that

sample schools and students, the sample may not support school-level reports.) The preparation fee is $50.00 per school; additional fees apply for custom modules.

Compare with Other Data Sources

CSCS results will be enriched if analyzed in the context of other information. According to Roach/Kartochwill (2004), information about school climate and school culture may be more meaningful when gathered from multiple sources, such as the following.

California Healthy Kids Survey. As noted, a major criteria for inclusion of questions in the CSCS was alignment to the school-climate questions asked of students on the California Healthy Kids Survey. In particular, school leaders should compare staff perceptions with student self-report of school connectedness and developmental supports (caring relationships with adults, high expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation); school safety, violence, and harassment; and substance use at school.

School Records. Other data typically collected in effectiveness studies of school climate include number and kinds of discipline referrals, school demographic information, school vandalism costs, and behavioral observations in classrooms (Sprague et al. 2001). CSCS results can be correlated with student achievement, attendance and discipline data, as well as measures of teacher satisfaction and sense of efficacy to provide a more meaningful picture of school functioning. Observations and interviews can be analyzed with behavior referrals and other artifacts that provide evidence of the themes and issues identified in the examination of school culture.

Qualitative Data. Information collected from the CSCS can be enriched with interviews and observations. Surveys and questionnaires are useful for assessing the frequency with which events occur, but they do not assess the personally relevant meanings attached to events. To understand meaning in schools, it is necessary to assess interpretations of students, staff, and other community members (Rentsch 1990). The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can provide more meaningful information about school contexts to guide systemic prevention and intervention efforts, resulting in improved outcomes for students.

Discuss with Students and Staff

Discuss the results with both students and staff to explore their meaning in more depth. Obtain their input into how the school might better meet the needs identified. It is especially important because it communicates to them that you value the input into how to improve the school climate. The process itself expresses caring and support and provides an opportunity for meaningful participation, thus contributing to a more positive school climate.

It is essential to explore the meaning of the data with students themselves, to add context. In this regard, an important tool to consider is holding a ***Listening to Youth Circle*** focus group. This highly structured focus-group process brings together youth and adults to exploring the meaning of data about the school and elicit student input on how to improve the school climate. For further information, contact Bonnie Benard at 510.302.4208.

Add Questions to your Next CSCS

Determine what additional information is needed from staff to guide school improvement efforts and consider adding questions to your next CSCS or CHKS. Both surveys were designed so that schools can add additional questions to help them conduct a more individualized and comprehensive assessment.

Questions the CSCS Can Help Answer

- Does the school provide a fair, inviting, and supportive learning environment?
- Are students given high expectations for academic success?
- Are students ready and motivated to learn?
- Do staff have positive, caring relationships with students?
- Is school a safe place for students and staff?
- Do staff feel responsible for improving the school? Is school an inviting place to work, and are staff supportive and respectful of each other?
- Do schools collaborate with their community?
- How much of an issue for the school are risk behaviors and problems? What learning barriers are schools facing?
- Do school policies, services, and resources address student problems and needs?

TABLES 1.2-1.6

Table 1.2: What is your role at this school? (Q1)

Table 1.3: Do you provide services to the following types of students? (Q2)

Table 1.4: How many years have you worked, in any position, at this school? (Q3)

Table 1.5: How many years have you worked at any school in your current position (e.g., teacher, counselor, administrator, food service)? (Q4)

Table 1.6: What is your race/ethnicity? (Q5)

Tables 1.1-1.6 provide information on the number and characteristics of staff that completed the survey, based on the first five questions. These questions are asked for two purposes:

- To help determine the representativeness of the sample compared to the school staff as a whole (how similar are the two); and
- Enable further analysis of the dataset to understand how perceptions of school climate vary by subgroups of staff.

In regard to the second purpose, these questions have enabled CDE to provide supplemental reports disaggregating results based on the race/ethnicity of staff and whether they have responsibilities for special education and migrant education.

To help determine how valid and useful are the results, pay attention to how many staff completed the survey compared to how many are employed at the participating schools. As discussed in the Introduction, the higher the proportion of respondents (response rate), the more representative are the results. Any response rate under 60% should be considered insufficient. Rates below this threshold do not mean the results are not useful. They still tell you how respondents perceive the school environment and conditions. These perceptions need to be taken into consideration. But you cannot assume that the results represent all staff. Those that took it could have a particular bias that prompted them to be more interested in the survey than those that did not (e.g., more negative or positive). Strategies for increasing staff participation are discussed in the *CSCS Administration Guidebook*.

Similarly, you should pay attention to whether any of the characteristics of the sample might be skewed in favor of one group of staff over another. Are there proportionally more teachers, or more long-term staff versus short-term, or more special education teachers versus others. However, for districts with very small samples, some data may have been suppressed in order to insure confidentiality, as discussed in the Introduction.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

In the analysis of 2004-06 statewide results, the roles performed by the respondents were very similar in elementary, middle, and high schools. Across traditional schools, about 80% of respondents were teachers and 5% administrators. The percentage of counselors and psychologists was higher in middle and high schools (4-5%) than elementary (2%). The continuation school sample had fewer teachers (69%) and more administrators (10%) and counselors (7%). This reflects both the needs of these schools and their smaller size (thus fewer teachers). Only 1-2

percent in each school level were prevention staff, nurses, or health aides. Regarding length of employment, half or more of staff had been at their schools for six or more years. Roughly one quarter had taught only 2 years or less.

This section discusses questions that measure staff perceptions of the degree to which schools have a positive, supportive learning and teaching environment characterized by setting high academic standards (rigor), promoting academic success, relevant instruction, staff supports and collegiality, safety, and parent involvement. One of the four essential school-climate factors identified by McEvoy and Walker (2000) is "the affirmation and celebration of achievement for the purpose of enhancing commitment to academic progress for all and to the prosocial mission of the school." They add: "An effective school is imbued with an esprit de corps in which every member feels that he or she is a valued participant in working toward meaningful goals."[18]

SUPPORTIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

Table 2.1: This school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn. (Q6)

Table 2.6: The school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work. (Q12)

See also Table S1

Two questions on the survey assess the general impression of staff of the level to which their school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn and staff to work. The results from these two questions provide a lens through which to examine the rest of the survey data, shedding light on the factors that might explain positive or negative responses to these questions.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

The 2004-06 CSCS revealed the most positive responses, and thus presumably highest staff satisfaction, were found in elementary and continuation schools, which reported similar results. Percentages strongly agreeing that the school was a *supportive/inviting place for staff to work* declined from 49% in ES to 35% in HS, before rebounding in CS to 48%. For *students*, the percentages declined from 61% to 40%, before rebounding in CS to 55%. Given the concerns over teacher retention (see below), it is troubling that statewide staff perceive schools more supportive/inviting for students than themselves.

STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Tables 2.1–2.5

Table 2.1: This school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn. (Q6

Table 2.2: This school sets high standards for academic performance for all. (Q7)

Table 2.3: This school promotes academic success for all students. (Q8)

Table 2.4: This school emphasizes helping students academically when they need it. (Q9)

Table 2.5: This school emphasizes teaching lessons in ways relevant to students. (Q11)

(See also Table S1)

18 The other three factors are a safe environment, well-understood, sequenced curriculum that demand high level of mastery, and regular assessments.

Table 4.8

This school encourages students to enroll in rigorous courses (such as honors and AP), regardless of their race, ethnicity, or nationality. (Q20)

Tables 2.1-2.5 provide the results for the five questions that specifically assess the student learning environment and the academic norms and standards at the school. Related to this, Tables 3.4-3.5 (as discussed in Section III), provide further information on staff perceptions that the school maintains high expectation for and belief in student success.

Academic Rigor and Relevance

An emphasis on academic success was one of the school-climate factors under a school staff's control that research on effective schools has linked to better student learning and performance.[19] Lee and Smith (1999) stress the importance of a clear school-wide cultural emphasis on academic excellence among school staff to produce academic achievement gains among students. Similarly, a more rigorous curriculum and high academic standards have been found to have a positive impact on student achievement (Harris & Herrington 2006). For example, students are more likely to drop out of schools that have less rigorous curricula, entrenched tracking programs, and disengaged teachers.[20] Untracking, the educational practice of providing increasing amounts of social supports for previously low-achieving students while maintaining a rigorous educational curriculum, is one promising approach.[21]

Likewise, a consistent theme in the literature on promoting learning engagement is the importance that student lessons and assignments have relevance to students present or future lives.[22] As the National Research Council (2004) emphasized, engaging schools "provide choices for students and they make the curriculum and instruction relevant to adolescents' experiences, cultures, and long-term goals, so that students see some value in the high school curriculum."

Thus Rigor and Relevance, along with Relationships, are the three pillars of school reform that the Gates Foundation and others have stressed — "the new three R's, the basic building blocks of better high schools" (Gates 2005). The importance of caring relationships is discussed in Section III; relevance and rigor in the concept of cultural competence are discussed in Section IV.

Implications for Closing the Achievement Gap

Efforts to close the race/ethnicity achievement gap need to pay particular attention to the cultural relevance of instruction. According to Linquanti (2004) successfully educating culturally and linguistically diverse student means: "engaging *all* students, regardless of language proficiency. We must do this with age- and grade-appropriate material and ensure multiple opportunities for language development *and* content learning. This requires high expectations, a strong understanding of pedagogy, good data to guide instruction, and a drive to continually improve practice through collaborative effort."

Harper and deJong (2004) argue that in teaching students from racially and linguistically diverse background, teachers should:

19 Klinger 2000; Willms 1992; Lytton & Pyryt 1998; Zigarelli 1996

20 Bryk & Thum 1989; Rumberger 1995

21 Mehan 1997.

22 Daggert 2005; Klem & Connell 2004; Legters, Balfanz, & McPartland 2002; Tolman, Ford, & Irby 2003; Wallach et al., 2006

» Examine the linguistic and cultural assumptions underlying their activities and instructional choices;

» Consider a wide range of factors when trying to understand and explain student behavior including affective factors (i.e., personality, motivation, attitude); cultural and educational background; LI literacy level; age; and approaches to learning; and

» Attempt to learn more about ways that other cultures structure their children's educational experiences and to explore ways that languages are similar and different.

Au (1998) noted that "Even inclusive constructivist approaches to teaching will be inadequate when they assume that similarities among students override differences related to ethnicity, primary language, and social class."

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

In the 2004-06 CSCS, the most positive responses from staff on these questions were found in elementary and continuation schools, which reported similar results. Responses were most negative among high school staff. For example, the results for strongly agreeing that the school *sets high academic standards* and *promotes academic success for all students* declined between elementary and high schools from 57%-62% ES to 32%-40% HS, depending on the question.

Related Questions

Table 3.4: How many adults at this school want every student to do their best? (Q35)

Table 3.5: How many adults at this school believe that every student can be a success? (Q37)

Table 4.8: This school considers closing the racial/ethnic achievement gap a high priority. (Q23)

Table 2.12: Do you feel you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas…meeting academic standards? (Q43)

Table 2.13: Do you feel you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas…evidence-based methods of instruction? (Q44)

STAFF WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Table 2.6 – 2.10

Table 2.6: This school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work. (Q12)

Table 2.7: This school promotes trust and collegiality among staff. (Q13)

Table 2.8: How many adults at this school have close professional relationships with one another? (Q40)

Table 2.9: How many adults at this school support and treat each other with respect? (Q41)

Table 2.10: How many adults at this school feel a responsibility to improve this school? (Q42)

(See also Table S1)

Tables 2.6-2.10 report the results of a series of questions related to school working conditions. Most of the focus on the relationships among staff and the supports they receive. They assess the level of trust, collegiality, and mutual respect among staff; the closeness of their professional relationships; and whether there is a shared commitment to improve the school. The results on these questions may help explain the results for how "supportive and inviting" they perceive the school is as a workplace (Table 2.6). As noted above, statewide, the percentage of staff strongly

agreeing with that statement is lower than strongly agreeing the school was a supportive and inviting place for students to learn.

Sherblom, Marshall, and Sherblom (2006) found that teacher and staff feelings of belonging, leadership support, collaboration, and a common assessment of school climate as positive all show strong associations to student proficiency in either math or reading. One reason for that association is that fostering a healthy, safe, caring, participatory, challenging, and supportive school environment is just as relevant to teacher motivation and performance as it is to students' (National Research Council, 2004). The school climate and teacher working conditions affect instructional quality and, as a result, student performance. Poor workplace culture lies at the heart of high teacher turnover and shortage (Gordon 2006; Ingersoll 2003).

These questions are especially relevant to the mounting problem of teacher recruitment and retention in California and nationally. Over one-fifth of California teachers leave the profession after the first four years, and 10% in high poverty schools transfer away to other schools each year. Recent research suggests that working conditions influence teachers' decisions about where to teach more than do salaries.[23] Gandara et al. (2003) emphasize that effective school reform requires a stable base of quality teachers. Teachers vote with their feet where to work, and school conditions influence this. As Perez et al. (2007) concluded, based on an examination of schools in California, that to attract high-quality teachers, "we need to create an environment in which they believe they have a chance to be successful." In a recent important survey by Futernick (2007), California teachers were less concerned with compensation (though this was still important) than they were with a whole range of particulars about the teaching and learning environment. Dissatisfied teachers who left, particularly in high poverty schools, cited lack of support, meaningful participation, and collegiality, as well as unclean and unsafe environments. Among those who stayed, the quality of staff relationships and opportunities to participate in decision-making at the school were most important. As Futernick concludes, merely expecting a lot from students does not, by itself, guarantee they will succeed academically, especially if the schools they attend are run-down, ill-equipped, and staffed with teachers who leave soon after they are hired.

Thus, many of the main reasons teachers leave or stay in the profession map to the three developmental supports in the school environment that research has found linked to student performance, e.g., caring relationships, opportunities for meaningful participation, and high expectations, as discussed in Section III. The school climate similarly affects both teachers and students. Students cannot be expected to feel connected to school and motivated to learn if staff do not feel supported and respected and, therefore, engaged in their work. In turn, the more students are connected to school and motivated to learn, the more teachers will feel satisfied in their profession. How teachers and other staff perceive their schools is critically important information. It is linked both to staff motivation, commitment and burnout, and to student performance.

Relevance for Closing the Achievement Gap

Harris & Herrington (2006) stress the school climate's effects on teacher training and retention for closing the achievement gap. They argue that the current achievement gaps in educational content are due, at least in part, to differences in teacher training and retention, and that there may be little hope of genuinely improving teacher quality in low-performing schools without greater resources and efforts to combat the harsh working conditions that have been shown to be the primary factors leading teachers to leave these schools. Similarly, Gandara et

23 Gandara et al. 2003; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin 2001; Loeb & Page 2000; Futernick 2007.

al. (2003) observe that when working and learning conditions are poor, they affect the attitudes of staff, and no doubt the ability of the school to attract competent and amiable people to work there. Given the difficult working conditions and the added demands placed on teachers of English learners, it would be expected that both training and guidance on how to address these challenges would be provided. The data, however, show otherwise. Teachers of English learners are largely left to fend for themselves with inadequate guidance, resources, and training.

Comparison Statewide Data (2004-06 CSCS)

The 2004-06 CSCS revealed that percentages strongly agreeing that the school was a *supportive/inviting place for staff to work* declined from 49% in ES to 35% in HS, before rebounding in CS to 48%. This is consistent with the declining pattern found for the school being a supportive/inviting place for students to learn, but the percentages are even lower at all grade levels, by twelve points in ES and five points in HS. Given the concerns over staff retention, it is troubling that statewide staff perceive schools more supportive/inviting for students than staff.

RESOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Table 2.11

This school provides the materials, resources, and training (professional development) needed to do your job effectively. (Q14)

Table 2.15

This school provides the materials, resources, and training (professional development) needed to work with special education (IEP) students. (Q15)

Tables 2.12–2.14, 2.16

Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas…

… meeting academic standards? (Q43)

… evidence-based methods of instruction? (Q44)

... creating a positive school climate? (Q52)

... serving special education (IEP) students? (Q50)

Tables 4.10–13

Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas…

…working with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural groups? (Q46)

…culturally relevant pedagogy for the school's student population? (Q47)

…serving English language learners? (Q48)

…closing the achievement gap? (Q49)

Tables 3.10 and 7.4

Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas…

…meeting the social, emotional, and developmental needs of youth (e.g., resilience promotion)? (Q51)

…positive behavioral support and classroom management? (Q45)

(See also Table S9)

Tables 2.11 and 2.15 provide the results for two general questions about the sufficiency of material supports, resources, and professional development in general and in special education. Eleven questions further explore staff perceptions of their need for professional development in a wide range of areas related to academic improvement, school climate, and meeting the needs of different groups of students. These results are summarized in Table S9, as well as individual tables in topic-specific sections. Compare the results to see where PD is seen as most needed.

Leithwood et al. (2004) emphasize that the second basic task of school leadership is staff development that stimulates teachers' thinking and reflection, individualizes support, and suggests instructional models. Sebring and Bryk (2000) found that Chicago schools in which principals invested significant time and resources in teacher professional development were more likely to see improvement in student learning outcomes. Effective staff development expands teacher skills and knowledge, but also elevates the teacher-administrator relationship to a highly personal partnership and in principals communicating their commitment to promoting professional growth (Gordon 2006; Blase & Blase 1999).

Teachers and staff in all schools need to be supported. For teachers and staff working in schools that are challenged with issues related to the achievement gap, support needs to be specifically responsive to the needs of the teachers and staff so that they can understand the context and environment in which they work, and how best to work with the students and families of their communities. Being attentive, responsive, and supportive to the needs of teachers and staff in such schools promotes the attraction and retention of quality teachers and staff. A supportive school culture and climate that does this would be one that, among other things, provides relevant professional development opportunities, develops and maintains supportive learning communities amongst the teachers and staff, and commits to constant, constructive, and open communication.

Standards and Instructional Quality

Tables 2.12 and 2.13 provide staff perceptions of their need for PD in meeting academic standards and implementing evidence-based methods of instruction.

Creating Positive, Safe, and Supportive School Climates

Table 2.14 assesses professional development needs relating to creating a positive school climate in general. Tables 3.10 and 7.4 address the related needs in the area of creating a safe and supportive environment for students. The Learning First Alliance (2001) emphasized that "Students will not experience schools as safe and supportive learning communities unless both beginning and experienced teachers are skilled in providing students with strong academic programs and are able to manage the classroom in ways that promote instruction and learning and result in student cooperation and engagement." Therefore, one of the report's primary recommendations is that state and professional standards for pre-service and continuing emphasize that staff have expertise in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive learning community.

Addressing the Needs of Diverse Populations

Four of the questions relate to addressing the needs of diverse racial/ethnic populations (Tables 4.10-4.13). The California P-16 Council (2008) particularly emphasizes the need to provide culturally-relevant professional development to all staff (see Section IV) and in the area of data use.

Special Education Needs

Two questions (Tables 2.15 and 2.16) provide data on the provision of supports to work with special education students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and perceived need for more professional development in meeting their needs.

Related Questions

Table 4.7: This school has staff examine their own cultural biases through professional development or other processes. (Q22)

PERCEIVED SCHOOL SAFETY

Tables 2.17-2.18

Table 2.17: This school is a safe place for students.[24] *(Q29)*

Table 2.18: This school is a safe place for staff. (Q30)

(See also Table S1)

Tables 2.17 and 2.18 provide staff perceptions of how safe the school is for students and staff. Compare these results with student perceptions of school safety in the CHKS. Related to this, Tables 4.12 and 6.1-6.6 provide data on staff perceptions of student violence and conflict at school that affect safety (see Section VI), which also can be compared to actual student self-report of violent behavior at school on the CHKS. Policies related to safety are discussed in Sections VII and VIII.

Physical and psychological safety are essential for good learning and teaching.[25] Indeed, Maslow (1954) considered safety and security second in importance in the hierarchy of basic needs (after physiological needs) that must be satisfied before individuals are able to attend to the higher-level needs (i.e. love/belonging, sense of competence/mastery, and self actualization) associated with school achievement and success in life. Safe environments enhance creativity, cooperative behavior, exploration, and positive risk-taking. Thus, safety is related to a broad set of needs that have traditionally received attention from educators. It is also characteristic of a high-quality school, one in which students feel a sense of belonging (Dwyer & Osher 2000; Rhodes 2007).

When staff (or students) report feeling unsafe at school, it is very important to gather additional information to identify the reasons for these feelings. The concept of safety is more than the antithesis of violence. The threat to safety through physical harm carries with it the psychological harm of anxiety and apprehension. In this sense, school safety is psychological as well as physical. Feelings of insecurity can have multiple sources, not all of which correctly reflect the level of danger on a school campus. To explore the origins of staff insecurity, analyze the CSCS

24 CHKS student comparison: "How safe do you feel when you are at school."

25 Bluestein 2001; Bowen & Bowen 1999; Dwyer and Osher 2000; Klinger 2000; Learning First Alliance 2001; Lintoot 2004

dataset to determine the association between reported levels of safety and the results from the perceived problems in school.

Relevance for Closing the Achievement Gap

In Gandara et al.'s (2003) study of schools that serve large numbers of English learners, respondents stressed the critical importance of creating a safe, calm campus climate by hiring sufficient security personnel and parents to monitor the campus. According to Barton (2003), fear of an attack at school or on the way to school was about twice as frequent for Black and Hispanic students as for White students, with a tenth of the minority students reporting such fears. CHKS data for 2006-08 reveals that only 49% to 53% of African American, Latino, and American Indian students in 9th and 11th grade felt safe or very safe in California high schools, compared to 63% of whites. Sampson, Sharkey, & Raudenbush (2007) observe the adverse effect community violence has on the language ability of African American children:

> *"Evidence also suggests that concentrated disadvantage and violence are directly linked to fewer reciprocated exchanges among neighbors outside of the immediate family, which implies a restricted range of public verbal interactions and communication infrastructures that children are exposed to as models for learning. The stress of violence in the community in particular may lead parents to isolate themselves out of fear, leading to a restriction in the sorts of social networks and reciprocated exchanges that serve as the building block of social support mechanisms, language development and social skills in verbal encounters."*

In a randomized experiment, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2004) found that school safety (as reported by parents) and time spent on homework (as reported by students) accounted for part of the increase in the achievement of boys aged 11-18 years when they moved from high-poverty to low-poverty schools. Borman and Overman (2004) report that a safe and orderly school environment, along with positive relationships, mattered the most in accounting for "academic resilience" among low-SES minorities.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Staff perceive elementary schools to be safer than high schools, and secondary schools are perceived as safer for staff than students. Among elementary schools, about half of staff strongly agreed that their school was a *safe place for students* (53%) and *for staff* (54%). Percentages then steadily declined to 37% for students and 44% for staff among MS, and to 34% and 41%, respectively, among HS. They rebounded among CS, to a mid-range 43% for students and 45% for staff (above MS, but less than ES). Among both ES and CS, percentages with respect to perceived student and staff safety were similar, but MS and HS staff reported that school was safer for staff than for students. These results are markedly consistent with student self reports on the CHKS for feeling safe or very safe at school in grades 7, 9, and 11 (with percentages slightly higher in 7th grade and lower in 9th).

Related Questions

How much of a problem at this school is…

Table 6.1: …harassment or bullying among students? (Q59)

Table 6.2: …physical fighting between students? (Q60)

Table 5.5: …disruptive student behavior? (Q61)

Table 4.2: …racial/ethnic conflict among students? (Q62)

Table 5.3: …lack of respect of staff by students? (Q64)

Table 5.2: …cutting classes or being truant? (Q65)

Table 6.5: …gang related activity? (Q66)

Table 6.6: …weapons possession? (Q67)

Table 6.3: vandalism (including graffiti)? (Q68)

Table 6.4: theft? (Q69)

Learning Supports Module:

Table 8.15: This school enforces zero tolerance policies. (Q2.7)

Table 8.17: This school has sufficient resources to create a safe campus. (Q2.3)

Table 8.18: This school seeks to maintain a secure campus through such means as metal detectors, security guards, or personal searchers. (Q2.8)

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

Table 2.19: This school has clean and well-maintained facilities and property. (Q32)

(See also Table S1)

An assessment of school climate must include the quality of the physical properties of the school and classroom.[26] What is the structural physical condition of the school buildings and grounds, the classroom and materials, and the playground? The Learning First Alliance (2001) considers a physical plant that promotes safety and community one of the characteristics of a supportive learning community.

There is considerable consensus that school facilities play an important, albeit indirect, affect on academic achievement.[27] It is difficult to both teach and learn in grossly inadequate facilities (Ortiz 2002). Poor school conditions affect teacher turnover. Teachers do not want to teach in dirty, dangerous, and uncomfortable conditions, and so they leave when they can. An unpleasant environment is simply not fair to teachers or students. Gandara et al. (2003) observe that, in economically difficult times, policymakers need to make difficult decisions about priorities – what priority does a safe, clean, and hospitable school have, especially when we know that this will have an impact on retaining experienced teachers? In interviews by Gandara and Rumberger (2007), teachers and principles across California schools frequently mentioned the importance of a safe and inviting atmosphere, including attractive school grounds, for both students and parents.

Relevance for Closing the Achievement Gap

Teachers of English learners are more apt than teachers of English speakers to report a lack of facilities conducive to teaching and learning. Gardara et al. (2003) observe that In a Harris survey close to half of teachers in schools with higher percentages of English learners reported the physical facilities at their schools were only fair or poor, compared to 26 percent of teachers in schools with low percentages of English learners. Teachers in schools with high percentages of English learners were 50 percent more likely to report bathrooms that were not clean and open throughout the day and having seen evidence of cockroaches, rats, or mice. More than a third of principals

26 Anderson 1982; Freiberg 1998; Esposito 1999

27 Gandara et al. (2003) observe that it is notably difficult to establish a direct, firm link between the quality and condition of school facilities and the educational outcomes for students, largely because the quality of school facilities is so highly correlated with wealth of the students and communities that schools serve.

in schools with higher concentrations of English learners reported that their classrooms were never or often not adequate, compared to 8 percent of principals with low concentration of EL students. Such conditions not only make it more difficult to teach English learners, they also make it difficult to retain their teachers.

Related Questions:

Table 6.3: How much of a problem at this school is… vandalism (including graffiti)? (Q68)

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Table 2.20: This school is welcoming to and facilitates parent involvement. (Q31)

(See also Table S1)

This question is designed to assess the climate of the school towards parents, how it relates with them. Social relationships or ties among students, parents, teachers, and administrators, are a key component of effective and improving schools.[28] In Section III, we discuss the importance of positive, caring staff-student relationships. Positive relationships with parents are also important. Many studies show that parent and other family involvement in children's learning is a critical element of student success, and emphasize the importance of schools finding ways to involve them.[29] Their involvement in schooling has broad positive effects for students, families, and schools.[30] When families are involved at school, not just at home, children do better in school and stay in school longer (Henderson & Berla 1994). Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy (2006) suggest there are three social resources in schools that affect achievement: an academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and trust in parents and students. Klinger (2000) lists strong parental involvement among the three important school climate factors research has related to better learning and performance (citing Goldring & Shapira, 1996; Ho & Willms, 1996).[31]

The Learning First Alliance (2001:20) lists "involvement of families, students, school staff, and the surrounding community" as one of the four core elements essential to creating safe and supportive school communities that foster high academic achievement. The Alliance argues that when parents feel valued and welcomed in the school—especially those who otherwise would feel vulnerable or ill at ease — it helps them to take active roles in the school and in their children's education. This participation helps create and maintain a sense of community in the school, and students are more committed to the school. To foster meaningful family involvement, it recommends that both students and parents should be actively involved in determining the school's basic values, goals, rules, and safety measures, and in devising ways to strengthen school-family relations. Schools should encourage parents to visit frequently; participate in school activities, planning, and events; and to communicate discipline policies and procedures in order to help the school maintain discipline. They should also regularly receive data about their children and school, such as provided by the CHKS and CSCS.

However, data on the value of parent involvement varies depending on its nature. The most consistent, positive finding is for parent involvement in their child's school work and education. For example, Wenglinsky (2007) found

28 Ancess 2003; Barnes 2002; Bryk & Schneider 2002; Elmore 2004; Spillane 2004

29 For a general discussion of the importance of school-family-community connections and descriptions of strategies for enhancing them, see U.S. Department of Education 1994; Epstein 1996.

30 See Henderson & Berla 1994; Henderson & Mapp 2002; Epstein 1991, 1996.

31 See also: Delgado-Gaitán 1991; Okagaki, Frensch, & Gordan 1995; Steinberg et al. 1988; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown 1992; Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch 1996; Steinberg 1997; Useem 1992.

no differences between low-income students attending private vs. public high schools on tests or college attendance as long as families took an active role in their education (see also the discussion below of Guttman and Midgley 2000).

Data about actual parent involvement *in* the school is more mixed. On the one hand, some research shows it strongly correlated with children's academic achievement, attendance, attitude, and continued education.[32] On the other hand, Borman et al. (2002) found that Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) efforts that require the active involvement of parents and the local community in school governance and improvement activities tended to achieve worse outcomes than models that do not require these activities. They postulate that taking strong actions to encourage parents to play significant roles in school governance and reform may help the school grow as an institution, but these activities are not likely to have strong impacts on student achievement (Epstein 1995). It could even sidetrack schools if the immediate priority is to improve student achievement. They conclude that school-based efforts aimed at helping families enrich their children's learning opportunities outside of school are far more likely to help individual children succeed with specific academic goals.

Klinger (2000) found average school achievement among 6th graders was independent of parental involvement, measured largely by the interaction between parents and children, which did not show a significant absolute effect. There was a strong correlations between individual SES and student achievement in schools with strong parental involvement, reflecting that high-SES parents are more likely to be involved in schools and to promote their children's academic success).[33]

Relevance for Closing the Achievement Gap

Gutman and Midgley (2000) report that among poor African American students during the middle school transition, those students with either (1) high parental involvement or (2) feelings of teacher support or school belonging had higher GPAs in 6th grade. Students with both attributes had higher GPAs than students with only one.

Gandara and Rumberger (2007) stress that parents are too often overlooked as a resource for English learners. They observe that, although parent involvement has long been established as key to student achievement, many parents of EL students do not feel comfortable or welcomed in coming to school, and often feel that, once there, they have little to contribute. They describe strategies used in California schools in keep EL parents informed and involved in their child's learning.

32 Henderson & Berla 1994; Henderson & Mapp 2002; Perkins 2006.

33 Klinger (2000) questions whether frequency of school-home contacts is an unambiguous measure of parental involvement. Frequent teacher-parent communication may not be positive, since teachers often contact parents to discuss their children's learning or behavioral problems (Ho & Willms 1996).

III. Developmental Supports and Opportunities

If we are to fulfill the challenge from the National Research Council (2004) to create a "set of circumstances" that engage all students in learning, it is increasingly apparent that education must adopt a *holistic lens* that recognizes that successful learning cannot occur unless basic environmental supports and opportunities are in place to meet the developmental needs of the students. These developmental needs include love and belonging, security and safety, identity, autonomy, power, competence or mastery, and meaning.[34]

This is one of the fundamental lessons to be drawn from resilience research seeking to identify the *protective factors* that account for successful individual adaptation in the face of adversity, the ability to "bounce back" in the face of stress, trauma, and adversities such as poverty, racism, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and physical and mental illness.[35] Resilience research documents that, given the proper supports that address these developmental needs, the majority of youth can succeed in school and life in the face of multiple environmental stressors and risk factors. Some researchers have specifically sought to account for "educational resilience," defined as "the heightened likelihood of success in school and in other life accomplishments, despite environmental adversity."[36]

As discussed in the Introduction, in meeting these developmental needs there is an emergent consensus of the importance of fostering three inter-related developmental supports and opportunities within schools: *caring adult relationships*; *high expectations*; and *opportunities for meaningful participation* (Benard 1991, 2004). These are fundamental protective factors for both learning and health, meaning that they buffer against the adversities and risk factors that children may experience as learning barriers and they enable and motivate them to both learn and live healthy lives.[37] Students in schools that create environments rich in these developmental supports and opportunities are more likely to report higher school connectedness, better attendance, and better performance, and to have lower rates of dropping out and risk factors such as alcohol and other drug abuse, violence, and delinquency than students in other schools without these supports. Michael Rutter, in his classic research into effective schools in high poverty communities, found that "turnaround schools"— schools that were successfully able to narrow the achievement gap for students in high poverty areas—were those that created a school climate grounded in these three protective factors (Rutter et al. 1979). According to Schaps & Solomon (2003), students develop a sense of community or connectedness in schools that constantly meet their needs to be supported and to exert influence.

When asked what the educational system can do to increase and support student success, students consistently site addressing the void of these three factors in their classrooms.[38] Powell (2003) stresses that alternative education must use resilience-promoting practices that lead to opportunities for meaningful involvement, caring relationships, and high expectations. Quinn et al. (2006) draw similar conclusions from the literature.

34 Benard 2004; Baumeister & Leary 1995; Deci 1995; Hillman 1996; Maslow1954; Richardson 2002; Ryan & Deci 2000; Sandler 2001.

35 Benard 1991, 2004; Masten & Coatsworth 1995; Werner & Smith 2001.

36 Wang, Haertel, & Walberg 1993:3, 1997; Waxman, Gray, & Padron 2003.

37 See also: Greenberg et al. 2003; Resnick et al. 1997; Ornstein & Sobel 1999; Bransford, Brown & Cocking 2000; Lester, Masten, & McEwen 2006.

38 Cushman 2003; Pope 2001; Schultz & Cook-Sather 2001; Strucker et al. 2001.

An important outcome of school climates with these developmental supports and opportunities is that they promote relational trust between teachers and students, which has been found to be a major factor in a school's academic standing, influencing academic achievement and the maintenance of an effective learning environment. Bryk and Schneider (2002, 2003) found that schools with high trust levels are three times more likely to report gains in reading and math scores. Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy (2006) suggest there are three social resources in schools that affect achievement: an academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and trust in parents and students. The need for trust among all levels of the school system is also emphasized by Marshall, Pritchard, & Gunderson (2004). Ryan and Patrick (2001) found that supportive relationships with teachers created trust in the teacher, decreased disruptive behaviors, and improved social efficacy with peers (see also Schaps, Battistich & Solomon 1997).

Simply stated, a student's educational success can be enhanced if a student perceives his or her school climate to be one that is caring, communicates high expectations, and provides opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution (Benard 2004). Educators who employ pedagogical strategies that authentically embrace and develop these developmental supports and opportunities can create a school climate that positively fosters student resilience which in turn contributes to quantifiable positive outcomes for students—especially students in high-risk environments.[39]

The California Healthy Kids Survey contains scales that assess each of these three developmental supports and opportunities. Drawing upon these scales, comparison questions were included in the CSCS to assess each area. Discussed in this section are some of the research linking these supports to school outcomes. The results are reported in Section III of the report. Below, we discuss each of these protective factors individually as well as questions assessing school strategies and programs to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of youth and promote positive development. Compare these results with staff perceptions on the survey indicators of learning engagement such as learning motivation and truancy, as discussed in Section IV, as well as student school connectedness as assessed by the CHKS. Over time, as perceptions of the supports the school provides increase, so should indicators of engagement.

A more extensive discussion of the theoretical framework and research supporting the connections between these developmental supports and opportunities and positive academic, health, social, and behavioral outcomes is contained in the *CHKS Guidebook to the Resilience and Youth Development Module*. This document also includes strategies that schools can use to implement these supports.

CARING ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

Tables 3.1 - 3.3

Table 3.1: How many adults at this school really care about every student?[40] *(Q33)*

Table 3.2: How many adults at this school acknowledge and pay attention to students?[41] *(Q34)*

Table 3.3: How many adults at this school listen to what students have to say?[42] *(Q36)*

39 Benard 2003, 2004; Brooks & Goldstein 2001, 2003, 2004; Brown, D'Emidio-Caston & Benard 2001; Henderson & Milstein 2003; Jessor 1993; Masten 1997; Noddings 2003; Schaps 2000, 2003; Selig et al. 2006

40 CHKS student comparison: "At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who really cares about me."

41 CHKS student comparison: "At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who notices when I'm not there."

42 CHKS student comparison: "At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who listens to me when I have something to say.

(See also Table S4)

Tables 3.1-3.3 describe staff perceptions of the same three areas that constitute the CHKS Caring Relationships scale asked of students: to what extent do adults at the school care about students, acknowledge/pay attention to them, and listen to them. This enables schools to assess how consistent staff perceptions are to student perceptions. A consensus is emerging in the research literature that supportive teacher relationships combine with academic expectations and high quality pedagogy to enhance engagement and academic competence, which leads to higher achievement.

Arguably the most fundamental human need is to feel cared by, and connected to, another person; to be noticed, listened to, supported, and feel trust. Caring relationships between students and their teachers or other adults in the school are, therefore, the most powerful of developmental supports for improving academic performance.[43] Although the cornerstone of school improvement is good curriculum and instruction, relationships with teachers and other school staff play a critical role in connecting students to school, motivating them to learn, and determining how well they respond to instructional improvements. Reflecting this, teacher support or caring is the most common variable in measures of school connectedness or engagement. As James Comer (2005) stresses, "because relationships are so important to learning, strengthening instruction in a difficult school climate generally does not improve academic outcomes." In this light, he expresses concerns that "the recent increased pressure to improve student test scores has led many to feel that they do not have time to address anything but academic instruction." Gordon (2006) stresses is that it is a false assumption that most reliable way to promote student success is to hire teachers and principals based on knowledge and skills (as emphasized by NCLB). They are better characterized as prerequisites. They are not sufficient in themselves. More important are innate talents such as building relationships with students and the ability to engage them in learning. Wentzel (1997) called close teacher-student relationships "the hidden curriculum."

In longitudinal and ethnographic studies, youth of all ages continually state that what they want is a teacher who cares. Phelan et al. (1992) admonish that, "the number of student references to wanting caring teachers is so great that we believe it speaks to the quiet desperation and loneliness of many adolescents in today's society." Student authors Strucker et al. (2001), found the following:

> *Mentioned more than any other topic…was the feeling that teachers really did not care about us as people. We do not deny that some of our teachers showed some interest in us, but our writing showed how much anger and loss we still had toward teachers who rendered us invisible and silent." (p.155)*

Staff communicate caring by such practices as active and empathetic listening, noticing or paying attention to students, being involved in school activities, and showing respect, courtesy, fairness, and trust. These practices, often discussed as personalization, play a critical role in connecting students to school, motivating them to learn, and determining how well they respond to instructional improvements and perform at school. Study after study identify this as one of the most important qualities of a positive school climate.[44] Students who report caring and supportive interpersonal relationships in school have more positive academic attitudes and values, to be more

43 Benard 2004; Comer et al. 1999; Pianta 2008; Resnick 2000; Werner 2001

44 Akey 2006; Battistich et al. 1997; Beasley 1994; Bryk and Schneider 2002; Connell & Wellborn 1991; De La Rosa 1998; Dupper 2006, Eccles et al. 1993, 1997; Esposito 1999; Floyd 1996; Klem and Connell 2004; Lange & Sletten 2002; Leone & Drakeford 1999; Marzano & Marzano 2003; McCall 2003; Muller 2001; National Research Council 2004; Newell, Van Ryzin and Mark 2007; Perkins 2006; Powell 2003; Quinn 2006; Richardson & Griffin 1994; Ruus 2007; Ryan and Patrick 2001; Quinn et al. 2006; Quint 2006; Ryan and Patrick 2001; Wentzel 1997; Zins et al. 2004).:.

satisfied with school,[45] to attend school more frequently, to learn more,[46] and to report that they are more engaged in academic work.[47] Caring relationships between teachers and students is essential to creating trust, as discussed above, and seems to be a key factor for maintaining high levels of discipline, as discussed in Section VIII.

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health found that students who felt cared for by their teachers were more connected to their school, attended school more regularly, and performed better. They were also far less likely to be involved in health risk behaviors that are barriers to learning, including alcohol and drug use and violence (Resnick et al. 1997). Hanson, Austin, and Lee-Bayha (2003) found that California student test scores (SAT-9) improved over a one-year period in relationship to the level to which students reported caring relationships at school (as they also did for high expectations). Akey (2006) reports that supportive teachers, along with high expectations, were key to the development of both student engagement and perceived academic competence in an evaluation of the First Things First school reform initiative in an urban high school, as discussed further below.

Meeting academic standards, therefore, requires that schools put relationships at the heart of schooling. As Nel Noddings (1988) articulates:

> *At a time when the traditional structures of caring have deteriorated, schools must be places where teachers and students live together, talk with each other, take delight in each other's company. My guess is that when schools focus on what really matters in life, the cognitive ends we now pursue so painfully and artificially will be achieved somewhat more naturally… It is obvious that children will work harder and do things—even odd things like adding fractions—for people they love and trust.*

Statewide Comparison Results (2004-06 CSCS)

California schools have a long way to go in improving staff-student relations. For each of these questions, the percentages of traditional school staff reporting that the indicator applied to *nearly all* adults at the school only exceeded fifty percent in elementary schools (and not for all indicators). They then steadily declined, in most cases by about half, in high schools. Endorsement that nearly all adults *really care about all students* declined from 61% in ES to 32% in HS. Percentages were almost exactly the same for *acknowledging and paying attention to students*. Percentages were lower in all schools for *listening to what students have to say,* declining from 45% in ES to only 20% in HS.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Tables 3.4–3.5

Table 3.4: How many adults at this school want every student to do their best?[48] *(Q35)*

Table 3.5: How many adults at this school believe that every student can be a success?[49] *(Q37)*

See also Table S4.

45 Baker 1999; Battistich et al. 1995; Ryan & Deci 2000; Shouse 1996; Skinner & Belmont 1993; Wasley et al. 2000; Yowell 1999

46 Bryk & Driscoll 1988; Bryk, Lee, & Holland 1993

47 Eccles et al. 1983; Gambone et al. 2004; Wigfield & Harold, 1992

48 CHKS student comparison: "At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who always wants me to do my best."

49 CHKS student comparison: "At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who believes that I will be a success."

Section II of the CSCS report provides data on staff perceptions about academic standards and norms in the school. Tables 3.4-3.5 describe the degree staff hold high expectations that all students will do their best and succeed, as measured by two questions drawn from the CHKS High Expectations Scale.[50] Holding students to high expectations to succeed academically is a mantra of school reform efforts. Perhaps more than any other variable, low expectations on the part of school staff have been correlated with poor student academic outcomes. Vice versa schools that establish high expectations for all youth — and give them the support necessary to achieve them — have high rates of academic success.

However, as Perez et al. (2007:76) observe, "What constitutes high expectations is a matter of debate." It has encompassed: (1) verbal encouragement to students that their school is the best; (2) making schools "fun and exciting," and (3) pressure to succeed on tests, which can by itself be counterproductive, leading to stress and reduced connectedness. Research shows that effective high-expectation messages must convey that adults in the school believe students can and will succeed, that they won't give up on them but will encourage and help them to do their best, nurturing each youth's unique strengths and pathways to success. Such "challenge + support" messages, as measured by the CHKS and CSCS, allow for the freedom and exploration necessary to develop the sense of competency, autonomy, identity, and self-control youth need to succeed academically. Hanson, Austin, and Lee-Bayha (2004) found that California student test scores (SAT-9) improved over a one-year period in relationship to the level to which students reported high expectations at school on the CHKS (as they also did for caring relationships).

Conveying positive high expectations messages in a classroom and school environment occurs at several levels. The most obvious and powerful is at the *belief* level, where the teacher and other school staff communicate the message that the student has everything he or she needs to be successful. Through relationships that convey this deep belief, students can learn to believe in themselves and in their futures. They develop the critical internal assets (resilience strengths) of self-efficacy, self-awareness, and goals and aspirations.

Relationship between Caring Relationships and High Expectations

Caring relations and high expectations appear to work in concert in motivating students to learn and improving performance. One without the other is less effective. One the one hand, research indicates that students who have a high sense of community or connectedness rooting in caring relationships with teachers and other staff may be more motivated to abide by the norms and values emphasized by the school and thus perform and behave better.[51] On the other hand, as Lee and Smith (1999) argue, without a clear school-wide cultural emphasis on academic excellence among school staff, fostering a sense of community in itself is not enough to produce academic achievement gains among students. Combined, caring relationships and high expectations, along with quality pedagogy, appear to be the linchpins of a positive school climate that promotes achievement.

For example, in an evaluation of a comprehensive urban secondary school reform project, Akey (2006) concluded that supportive teacher relationships, academic expectations, and high quality pedagogy combined to enhance engagement and academic competence, which, in turn, lead to higher achievement. This study suggests that the earlier schools and teachers begin to build students' *confidence* in their ability to do well, the better off students will be. Because students' perceptions of their capacity for success are key to their engagement in school and learning,

50 CHKS student comparison: "At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who always wants me to do my best." CHKS student comparison: "At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who believes that I will be a success."

51 Benard 2004; Battistich, Schaps & Wilson 2004; Schaps 2003; Zins et al. 2004.

Akey recommends that schools should be designed to enhance students' feelings of accomplishment. Teachers whom students see as supportive and who set clear expectations about behavior help create an atmosphere in which students feel in control and confident about their ability to succeed in future educational endeavors.

Psychometric analyses (Hanson & Kim, 2007), and student focus groups conducted by WestEd (Benard & Slade, 2008), point to one factor underlying this association: students perceive supportive high-expectations messages as indications that teachers care about them. Effective expectation messages — being "lovingly pushed to learn" in the words of Cohen et al. (2009) — are one of the means by which students perceive that teachers care about them.[52] Students interpret messages that they can succeed, and that the school wants them to succeed, as reflective of caring and support.

In this regard, both CSCS and CHKS data suggest that, as students age, traditional schools become less caring and have lower academic expectations — a finding that should be cause for considerable consternation.

Statewide Comparison Results (2004-06 CSCS)

The percentages selecting that "nearly all adults" *wanted all students to do their best* ranged from 42% in high schools to 70% in elementary. These results were very consistent with those for strongly agreeing that the school set high academic standards. The percentages for *believing every student can be a success* were much lower: ranging from only 19% HS to 44% ES. In other words, *staff perceive their peers as much more likely to want all students to do well than to believe that every student can succeed, about 1.5-2 times more likely*. The implications of these differ results warrant further study. Can we turn around low-performing students and schools if we don't believe that all students can succeed?

Related Questions

Table 2.2: This school sets high standards for academic performance for all students. (Q7)

Table 2.3: This school promotes academic success for all students. (Q8)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Tables 3.6-3.9

Table 3.6: This school encourages opportunities for students to decide things like class activities or rules.[53] *(Q16)*

Table 3.7: This school gives all students equal opportunity to participate in classroom discussions or activities. (Q17)

Table 3.8: This school gives all students equal opportunity to participatein numerous extracurricular and enrichment activities.[54] *(Q18)*

Table 3.9: This school gives students opportunities to "make a difference" by helping other people, the school, or the community (e.g., service learning). (Q19)

(See also Table S3)

52 Mawhinney & Sagan (2007) consider high expectations "a crucial ingredient in personal-relationship building." At its core is "pedagogic caring" or the communication of a passion of learning and that students can achieve.

53 CHKS student comparison: "At school I help decide things like class activities or rules."

54 CHKS student comparison: "At school I do interesting activities."

Tables 3.6-3.9 describe staff perceptions related to student opportunities for meaningful participation in their own learning. Meaningful participation refers to the involvement of students in activities that are relevant, engaging, interesting, and/or foster a sense of responsibility and contribution (helping others). The four questions reported in these tables assess the degree to which staff agree that their school provided opportunities for students to participate in decision-making, in classroom discussions/activities, in extracurricular/enrichment activities, and in activities that "make a difference" such as service learning. These results can be compared with student self-report on the CHKS Meaningful Participation scale, which assesses students perceptions that they have opportunities to help decide things like class activities or rules and that they do interesting activities in school.

Such participatory opportunities contribute to a student's sense of *autonomy and control*, increase their involvement in school, and engage their motivation to learn and achieve.[55] Ignoring students' needs to have some power and control undermines their development of a sense of belonging to the school and may result in disconnection from it — a disconnection that the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health has found plays a significant role in poor school attendance and involvement in problem behaviors (Resnick et al.1997; Bonny et al. 2000). Involvement in extracurricular activities is a common indicator of commitment or connectedness to school (Libbey 2004). AddHealth analyses further revealed that rates of participation in extracurricular activities was one of four school characteristics (along with classroom management climate, school size, severity of discipline policies) that explained a significant percent of between-school variance in school connectedness (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum 2002).

Rutter et al.'s (1979) seminal school-effectiveness research identified active student participation "in all sorts of things that went on in the school" as one of the characteristics of schools with low levels of school failure and delinquency. Students in these effective schools "were treated as responsible people and they reacted accordingly," they concluded.

In the High/Scope Project, student-driven learning (having the power to plan their own activities) — even at ages 3 and 4 — was the critical characteristic of students in high-risk environments who, twenty years later as adults, had graduated from high school; had avoided poverty, teen pregnancy, and drug abuse; and were more likely to own their home (Weikart & Schweinhart 1997).

Statewide Comparison Results (CSCS 2004-06)

Statewide results suggest this is an area in which schools are particularly challenged and need improvement. Only 10-12% of middle, high, and continuation staff, and 17% of elementary, strongly agree that their school encouraged opportunities for students to decide things like class activities or rules student decision-making occurred (Austin & Bailey 2008). These results are consistent with the low percentages for students being high in Meaningful Participation on the CHKS (CHKS Statewide Results 2005-07).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Table 3.10

Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas….meeting the social, emotional, and developmental needs of youth (e.g., resilience promotion)? (Q51)

55 Fraser 1991; Kellmayer 1996; Benard 2004; Jennings 2003.

(See also Table S9)

All staff are asked about whether they feel a need for professional development on meeting the social, emotional, developmental, or behavioral needs of youth, as reported in Table 3.10. In the Learning Supports Module (Section VIII), several questions probe the level to which the school seeks to provide services or programs related to social-emotional development, including resilience promotion and character education (Tables 8.4-8.6). Table 5.9 provides results for how much of a problem at the school is student depression or other mental health problems. How does the perception of PD need compare to the results related to problems and services? How do they compare these results to student self-report on the CHKS for the level of developmental supports and opportunities and mental health problems. Also compare these results with those for providing counseling, prevention, and intervention services to address specific problems, as reported in Section VIII. For information on professional development opportunities in this area, contact the Center for Resilience and Youth Development at WestEd (510.302.4208).

RELEVANCE FOR CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

These developmental supports and opportunities, particularly more positive adult-student relationships, may be especially important in closing the Achievement Gap.[56] Their positive effects on achievement and other student outcomes may be most pronounced for the most at-risk students.[57] Muller (2001) found that among low-income students, those at-risk of dropping out who perceived their teachers as caring showed significantly higher test scores and greater math proficiency than those who reported lower levels of teacher caring. Jerald (2001) found that high-minority and high-poverty schools that "beat the odds" and score in the top third of their states were characterized by providing school climates with supports such as these.[58] As protective factors, they can help overcome the effects of the multiple risk factors that students of color and poverty experience. For example:

- Using data from NELS, Wimberly (2002) found that African American students experienced caring relations with teachers to a far less degree than did white students and less emphasis on achievement. He recommends creating an adult advocate for these students as early as middle school, training staff sensitivity to the potential differences among students, and making available activities that connect student to adults.
- Borman and Overman (2004) report that minorities from low SES were exposed to greater risks, had lower academic self-efficacy, and fewer resilience-promoting conditions that similar low SES Whites. The most powerful school characteristics for promoting math "resilience" (achievement in the face of challenges) were those associated with the supportive school community model of shielding children from adversity. A safe and orderly school environment, and positive teacher-student relationships were the characteristics that mattered most.
- In a study of a high-achieving middle school for Latino students in poverty, one of the school's characteristics was that staff cultivated and maintained positive relationships with their students, showing concern for their welfare, and demonstrated both respect and high expectations for them all. The result was that teachers were successful in maintaining both a high level of discipline and a caring culture (Davis & Pokomy 2004).

56 Bennett et al. 2004; Davis and Pokomy 2004; Legler 2004; Smith 2005; Wimberly 2002

57 Learning First Alliance 2001; Battistich et a1. 1995; Shouse 1996

58 Jerald, C. (2001). Dispelling the myth revisited: preliminary findings from a nationwide analysis of "high-flying" schools. Washington, DC: Education Trust. See also Benard 2004:86.

- As part of evaluation of Comer's School Development Model, Slaughter-Defoe (1996) found African American students report caring, helpful teacher-child relations as the most important dimension of school climate. Latino children respond more to broader range of variable, but also teacher fairness, caring, and praise for effort.
- Smith (2005) lists lack of respect & acceptance for diversity, low expectations, and poor teacher/student relationships as school factors that affect achievement of poor children of color.
- Bennett et al. (2004), in the report of the National Study Group for the Affirmative Development of Academic Ability, emphasize the need for a developmental approach to teaching and learning built on: (1) high quality teaching and instruction; (2) trusting relationships in school; and (3) supports for pro-academic behavior (strengths-based environmental approach, not deficits-based).
- Students of color consistently report low and differential expectations and standards based on race (National Research Council 2004:45-46). Davidson (1996) reported that Blacks were more likely than whites to state they would learn more if their teachers challenged them more.
- A school climate survey of students and staff in West Virginia found that African Americans were much less satisfied with school environments than their white peers in regard to academic expectations, instruction course-taking, counseling about educational options, respect, mentoring, caring relationships, and fairness (Education Alliance 2006).
- Pong and Hao (2007) found that school characteristics were more strongly related to GPA than neighborhood conditions among immigrant students. They concluded that schools can protect immigrants' children from poor neighborhood conditions if the school climate is positive and there are plenty of educated adult role models. If the children don't feel part of the school or close to people there, they perform poorly. They conclude, "For these children of immigrants, a standard deviation increase in such negative feelings towards school completely eliminates the academic benefits of attending a school with higher SES (by one standard deviation)."

IV. Respect, Cultural Sensitivity, and the Achievement Gap

This section discusses the questions that most directly relate to creating a school climate that treats students equitably, fairly, and respectfully, regardless of their race or ethnicity, and that is culturally relevant, sensitive, and tolerant. The previous section, *Developmental Supports and Opportunities*, emphasized the importance of creating school climates characterized by caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation for all students. Being treated fairly, equitably, and respectfully contribute to fostering these developmental supports, which lead to an outcome of greater school connectedness.

These issues are particularly germane to addressing the needs of the state's diverse population of students and closing its racial/ethnic achievement gap. This section also discusses other key factors described in the literature on promoting achievement among students of color: the use of instructional materials that reflect the culture of the population, the fostering an appreciation of student diversity and tolerance, the respect shown students' cultural beliefs and practices, the priority given to closing the achievement gap, and needs for professional development. The relevance of some of these questions to any individual district or school is contingent on the racial/ethnic composition of the school's students and staff. However, given the increasing diversity of the state's population, all schools must be sensitive to addressing the needs of a multicultural society.[59] More information about research related to closing the achievement gap is available at CDE's CTAG website (www.closingtheachievementgap.org/cs/ctag/print/htdocs/home.htm).

TREATING STUDENTS FAIRLY AND RESPECTFULLY

Table 4.3–4.4

Table 4.3: How many adults at this school treat all students fairly?[60] *(Q38)*

Table 4.4: How many adults at this school treat every student with respect? (Q39)

Tables 4.3-4.4 provide data on staff perceptions of the degree to which the school treats students fairly and with respect in general. Caring, supportive relationships are built on respect. Trust and respect between staff and students are common factors associated with school connectedness and academic performance, as well as improved health outcomes among students.[61] Compare these results with Table 5.3, reporting on the lack of respect of staff by students. Growing disrespect in schools today has been decried as undermining the ability of the majority of student to learn and teachers to teach (Public Agenda (2004). Respect for teachers is contingent on students feeling respected by them. A school that values and respects youth encourages youth to value education and learn (Newmann 1992; National Research Council 2004). In a study of factors associated with successful alternative education completion, McCall (2003) found that what was important was not smaller classes per se, but smarter strategies, including creating a climate of belonging and respect. Related to respect is also a sense of fairness (Table 4.3), which is also discussed in more detail in Section VII in regard to the fairness of rules and discipline (see Table 7.2).

59 See, for example, Gandara & Rumberger 2007.

60 CHKS student comparison: B6, "The teachers at this school treat students fairly."

61 Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson 2004; Blum 2005; Erbstein & Miller 2008

Related Questions

Table 5.3: How much of a problem at this school is lack of respect of staff by students? (Q64)

Table 7.2: This school handles discipline problems fairly. (Q27)

FOSTERING TOLERANCE AMONG STUDENTS

Table 4.1 - 4.2

Table 4.1: This school fosters an appreciation of student diversity and respect for each other.[62] *(Q24)*

Table 4.2: How much of a problem at this school is racial/ethnic conflict among students?[63] *(Q62)*

(See also Tables S5 & S7)

Tables 4.1-4.2 extends the theme of respect to provide staff perceptions of how much the school does to foster respect among students and an appreciation of diversity, and how much of a problem racial/ethnic conflict among students is to the school. Are school efforts to address the problem consistent with the level of racial/ethnic conflict? Compare these results with CHKS student report of being harassed because of their race and ethnicity. Are staff perceptions consistent with the level of student's own experience?

Smith (2005) lists lack of respect & acceptance for diversity, along with low expectations and poor teacher/student relationships, as school factors that affect achievement of poor children of color. Smith, Atkins, & Connell (2003) found students whose teachers exhibited higher levels of racial-ethnic trust and perceived fewer barriers due to race and ethnicity showed more trust and optimism and higher academic performance. Children exhibiting racial distrust and perception of barriers due to race had reduced performance.

CHKS (2005-07) data reveals that 16%-18% of secondary students report having been harassed because of their race, ethnicity, or national origin in the past 12 months, about 10% two or more times. This is the highest rate for any of the five hate-crimes or bias-related reasons for harassment (the others being religion, gender, sexual orientation, or physical/mental disability). Just under half of all students that report that had experienced any harassment (from 42% in 7th grade to 33% in 9th and 11th grade, for any reason), indicated it was related to race/ethnicity. CHKS Reports now also provide this harassment data broken down by the race/ethnicity of the student respondents.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Over four-in-ten staff in elementary and continuation schools (46% and 43%, respectively) strongly agreed their school *"fosters an appreciation for student diversity and respect*," dropping to three-in-ten in middle and high schools (31% and 28%). The percentage indicating that *racial/ethnic conflict* was a moderate-to-severe problem was very low in ES (7%), but it steadily rose to 28% in HS. Thus, there is a negative correlation between promotion of diversity appreciation and the level of perceived racial/ethnic problems, a finding relevant to the state's effort to close the racial/ethnic achievement gap. Lack of respect and acceptance for diversity are among the school factors that have been found to affect achievement of poor children of color, along with low expectations and poor teacher/student relationships (Smith 2005).

62 CHKS student comparison: B6, "The teachers at this school treat students fairly."

63 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, how many times on school property were you harassed or bullied for any of the following reasons? Your race, ethnicity, or national origin."

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Table 4.5–4.7

Table 4.5: This school emphasizes showing respect for all students' cultural beliefs and practices. (Q25)

Table 4.6: This school emphasizes using instructional materials that reflect the culture or ethnicity of its students. (Q21)

Table 4.7: This school has staff examine their own cultural biases through professional development or other processes. (Q22)

(See also Table S5)

Tables 4.5-4.7 report on the questions that explore more specifically the sensitivity shown to the students' culture and race/ethnicity by staff. The survey asks about general respect for their cultural beliefs and practices (Table 4.5), the use of instructional materials that reflect their culture and ethnicity (Table 4.6), and the staff's own examination of their potential cultural biases (Table 4.7). In related questions, Table 4.11 provides staff perceptions of the need for professional development in working with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural groups and Table 4.12 in culturally relevant pedagogy.

In a study of an economically diverse sample of middle school African-American adolescents, Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff (2003) found that students who experienced racial discrimination from teachers or peers showed declines in grades and academic self-concepts and made more friends who were not interested in school and displayed problem behaviors. Similar findings are reported by Smith, Atkins, and Connell (2003).

Robards (2008) reports on a staff development seminar in which teachers realized that they have the capacity to change their negative behaviors to positive ones for all student regardless of SES, ethnicity, language difference, or achievement (Robards 2008).

The California P-16 Council (2009) observed that the paucity of teachers of color in California magnifies the need for all teachers, especially those teaching children of color, as well as administrators and other staff, to have "a deeper understanding of every student's culture." "In the absence of such training," the Council observes, "the ground remains fertile for low expectations, unequal access to rigorous curricular programs, and for the groups listed previously, a disproportional enrollment in special education programs."

Monroe (2005) observes that growing evidence supports the view that school inequities involving African Americans, such as their disproportionate numbers who are targeted for disciplinary action, are best addressed through race-conscious approaches at the teacher preparation and professional development levels, including opportunities for teachers to interrogate their beliefs about African American students.[64]

INSTRUCTIONAL EQUITY

Tables 4.8–4.9

Table 4.8: This school considers closing the racial/ethnic achievement gap a high priority. (Q23)

Table 4.9: This school encourages students to enroll in rigorous courses (such as honors and AP), regardless of their race, ethnicity, or nationality. (Q20)

64 Monroe 2005.

(See also Tables S5 & S1)

Tables 4.8-4.9 address staff perceptions of instructional equity for racially/ethnically diverse students. Table 4.8 provides data on the level to which staff consider closing the racial/ethnic achievement gap a high priority at the school. Compare these results with those from Table 4.10 on staff professional development needs related to CTAG.

High expectations and rigorous curriculum and instruction, coupled with support for learning, are one of the conditions identified as promoting school connectedness (Blum 2005). Section III discussed the evidence that students of color may be particularly at risk of low expectations. Along with this is evidence they get less rigorous instruction (National Research Council 2004:83). Minority students are more likely to drop out of school than whites, and students in general are more likely to drop out when they experience less rigorous curricula, entrenched tracking programs, and disengaged teachers.[65] Untracking, the educational practice of providing increasing amounts of social supports for previously low-achieving students while maintaining a rigorous educational curriculum, is one promising approach (Mehan 1997). Noting that enrollment and completion in courses that help prepare students for successful entry into college are significantly lower for underperforming student subgroups than the rates for their white and Asian counterparts, the California P-16 Council recommended that the state needs to define more clearly what constitutes a rigorous program for students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Tables 4.10–4.13

Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas…

Table 4.10: …closing the achievement gap? (Q49)

Table 4.11: …working with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural groups? (Q46)

Table 4.12: …culturally relevant pedagogy for the school's student population? (Q47)

Table 4.13: …serving English language learners? (Q48)

Tables 4.10-13 explore the level of professional development staff feel they need in dealing with the state's diverse population. The California P-16 Council (2008), in an effort to address and close the achievement gap, specifically recommended that schools and districts provide culturally relevant professional development for all school personnel. Providing culturally responsive PD supports culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy is a key step in addressing the lack of connection between scholars and educators. California needs to develop a comprehensive, culturally relevant and responsive strategy for educators that will help them to become the kind of educators who can teach any student effectively.

Learning and teaching occurs within the context of the values, beliefs, and rituals of the school, community and the larger society. This understanding is necessary and a school's culture and climate needs to reflect and be responsive to the diverse racial, cultural backgrounds, and needs of its student and teacher populations. This is not always the case; students and teachers, whether because of color, race, ethnicity, or physical or mental challenges, often feel alienated from the norms and behaviors of the school culture or put off by teaching and learning practices that "do not reflect my background and where I come from." To communicate and do an effective job of teaching so learning

65 Bryk & Thum 1989; Rumberger 1995

can be maximized for students, California's educators need to have a cultural understanding of themselves, the students they teach, and the communities that house them.

In a survey of 5,300 teachers of English learners in California, Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005) found that more than half of teachers with 26-50% of their students designated EL had either zero or one in-service training session devoted to the instruction of EL students over a period of five years. Moreover, a primary complaint of respondents was that the in-service sessions were of uneven quality (Gandara & Rumberger 2006, who emphasize that "Even the best teachers require ongoing professional development to strengthen their teaching skills and disciplinary knowledge" but this is especially important for EL).

V. Learning Engagement and Readiness

As discussed in the Introduction, if we are to improve academic performance, having highly motivated or engaged students is essential. This section discusses questions that are direct or indirect indicators of learning engagement, as well as questions that assess health- and behavior-related learning barriers that may prevent students from being fully ready to learn, or even capable of learning to their ability and, therefore, from receiving the benefits of any instructional improvements. Indirect indicators of school engagement include how well behaved versus disruptive are students, the respect they show staff, and truancy. These are staff perceptions; they should be compared with student self-report on the CHKS about school connectedness and behavior. Section VI discusses questions assessing student substance use, another learning barrier and potential indirect indicator of engagement, as well as perceived violence and delinquency.

PERCEIVED LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Table 5.1

Based on your experience, how many students at this school are motivated to learn? (Q55)

(See also Table S6)

Table 5.1 reports the level to which staff perceive students at the school are motivated to learn. Compare these results with the level of student connectedness reported in the CHKS. As discussed in the Introduction, a key to turning around low-performing schools is enhancing student engagement in learning or motivation to learn. Declines in student engagement and motivation after elementary school have been long documented in the literature (Eccles et al. 1997).

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Consistent with research, the percentage of staff reporting that most or nearly all students are motivated to learn dropped markedly from 71% in elementary school to 49% in high school, and then to 30% in continuation school. Moreover, only 3-4% of secondary schools marked that nearly all students were motivated.

TRUANCY

Table 5.2

How much of a problem at this school is cutting classes or being truant?[66] *(Q65)*

(See also Table S7)

Table 5.2 presents staff perceptions about student attendance. Obviously, for students to learn they need to be attending school regularly. Poor attendance is also a marker of a wide variety of other problems, as well as low student connectedness to the school. Poor truancy has been identified as one of the most powerful predictors of not only poor achievement but also delinquency.[67] Truants are more likely to use drugs and have deviant friends. US Department of Education statistics show that two-thirds of male juveniles arrested while truant tested positive for drug use.

66 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, about how many times did you skip school or cut classes?"

67 Robins & Ratcliff 1978; Garry1996; Cairns, Cairns, & Neckerman 1989; Rumberger 1987.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Truancy was a minimal problem in elementary school, with only 8% of respondents indicating *cutting classes or being truant* was a moderate-to-severe problem, but percentages then rose dramatically to 56% in HS and to 63% in CS.

POSITIVE VS. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Tables 5.3-5.5

Table 5.3: How much of a problem at this school is lack of respect of staff by students? (Q64)

Table 5.4: Based on your experience, how many students at this school are well-behaved? (Q56)

Table 5.5: How much of a problem at this school is disruptive student behavior? (Q61)

(See also Tables S6 and S7)

Tables 5.3-5.5 discusses staff perceptions of how well-behaved were students in general and how respectful toward staff. Unruly student behavior and problems related to discipline increasingly interfere with teachers' ability to teach and students' to learn. In survey after survey of the public's and teachers' attitudes towards schools, lack of discipline has been identified as one of the most significant problems in secondary schools (Elam, Rose, and Gallup, 1996, cited by Hennen 2005). Research consistently supports a direct relationship between student time on task and student academic achievement (Brookover, Erickson, & McEvoy, 1997). The time taken to correct one student's behavior negatively influences the allocated instructional time of the teacher and the academic engagement of other students, who are distracted by the interruption (McEvoy & Walker 2000). Gottfredson (2001) reports that, nationwide, 27% of teachers say that student misbehavior keeps them from teaching "a fair amount to a great deal of the time."

Discipline also impacts efforts to retain teachers, who are not generally sent out from schools of education out prepared for the realities of today's classrooms. Teachers are ill-equipped to deal with disruptive and delinquent behaviors, and often feel under siege and defenseless (Hennen 2005). In one recent survey, more than 1 in 3 teachers said colleagues had left because student discipline was such a challenge and same number personally considered leaving (Public Agenda 2004).

Compare how respectful staff feel students are toward them (Table 5.3) with how respectfully they report staff treat students (Table 4.4), as well as students self-report of how respectfully staff treat them on the CHKS. If there is a disconnect, the reasons why this may be should be explored with both staff and students. If staff feel student disrespect is a serious problem, the feeling is likely reciprocal among students. More attention needs to be paid to promoting caring relationships between staff and students.

Relevance to Closing the Achievement Gap

In 1992, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that 56% of Black students and 52% of Hispanic students agreed with the statement that "Disruptions by other students get in the way of my learning," compared to 43% of white students (Barton 2003).

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Consistent with the results for perceived learning motivation and truancy, good student behavior declined and disruptive behavior increased between elementary and high school and was higher still in continuation schools.

- Only about 10% of staff across the four school types reported that nearly all students were *well behaved*. Among traditional schools, the great majority selected nearly all or most, with a relatively small range of 81% in ES to 77% in HS. The percentage dropped noticeably in CS to 60%.
- Among ES and MS, out of 14 student behaviors, *disruptive behavior* among students was top-rated as a moderate-to-severe problem to the school, and in HS it was second only to truancy. Staff considering disruptive behavior among students to be a moderate-to-severe problem at the school was lowest in ES at 38% and highest in CS at 55%. In contrast to the results for being well behaved, the perception of disruptive behavior as a moderate-to-severe problem was higher in middle school than high school (56% MS vs. 49% in HS). This may be because as students age, general disruptive behavior becomes less of an issue as compared to more serious forms of violence and substance use at school. This finding is discussed below.
- Perceived Physical and Mental Health

Tables 5.6-5.8

Table 5.6: Based on your experience, how many students at this school arrive at school alert and rested? (Q54)

Table 5.7: Based on your experience, how many students at this school are healthy and physically fit? (Q53)

(See also Table S6)

Table 5.9

How much of a problem at this school is student depression or other mental health problems?[68] *(Q63)*

(See also Table S7)

Learning readiness is usually a concept that is discussed in terms of early childhood, of ensuring that children are ready to enter and succeed in school. In fact, at all ages we must be concerned with whether students are ready to learn and that physical, psychological, and other noncognitive barriers to that readiness are identified and addressed. Tables 5.6-5.7 present the results for staff perceptions of the estimated proportion of students with two physical health indicators: (1) arrived at school alert and rested; and (2) are healthy and physically fit. Table 5.8 presents one mental health indicator: the degree to which depression or other mental health problems among students were a problem at the school. Evidence suggests that investments in children's physical and mental health promote learning over the school years and have profound effects on school readiness and early learning.

A healthy body supports a healthy mind. Schools that offer intense physical activity programs have shown positive effects on academic achievement—increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and reduced disruptive behavior—even when the physical education reduces the time for academics (Symons et al. 1997). In one program, when academic class time was reduced by 240 minutes per week to allow for increased physical activity, mathematics test scores were consistently higher than for those not in the program.[69] Students

68 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost everyday for two weeks or more than you stopped doing some usual activities?"

69 Symons et al. 1997; Shephard 1997; Shepard et al. 1984; Sallis et al. 1999.

in elementary school through high school perform better academically when they are physically active (Hanson et al. 2004). Analysis of CHKS data has shown that, among California secondary schools overall, the percentages of students in a school who routinely engaged in physical activity was associated with higher subsequent gains in standardized math, reading, and language SAT-9 scores over a one-year period (Hanson, Austin & Lee-Bayha 2003). CSCS Table 8.10 provides data on the actual level of physical education at the school; Section 8 further discusses the value of physical activity.

One of the most overlooked learning barriers is mental health. Depression is an illness affecting approximately four out of 100 teenagers each year, with serious consequences if not detected and treated. Depression increases the risk for suicide, which has tripled among youth aged 15–24 since 1950. It is now the third leading cause of death in this age group. Depression and other childhood psychopathologies also interfere with normal developmental processes and functioning. Depression is associated with compromised educational, social, and emotional outcomes. Depressed youth may get into trouble with alcohol, drugs, or sex; have trouble with school or grades; or have problems with family or friends.

Identifying children who experience significant episodes of depression is needed to create intervention options and to reduce growing risk prevalence rates. In addition, these students have a right to receive appropriate education supports to help them benefit from education. The CHKS and CSS contain an indicator of depression risk: the percentage of students who had felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that it stopped them from doing some usual activities. In the 2007 CSS, in grades 7 and 9 about three out of ten students answered positively; in grade 11, 35%. Moreover, analysis of CHKS data further revealed that as the percentage of students in a school who report that they felt sad or hopeless increased, subsequent gains in test scores between two years declined in reading, language, and mathematics (Hanson, Austin, & Lee Bayha 2004).

Much can be learned by conducting additional analyses of the characteristics of the youth who reported feeling sad and hopeless. In particular, pay attention to patterns of drug use, as these youth may be self-medicating themselves with drugs and need drug treatment or counseling. The dual problem of substance use and depression may in particular create challenges to learning.

Related Questions: Learning Supports Module

Table 8.7: This school provides adequate health services for students. (Q2.12)

Table 8.8: This school provides students with healthy food choices. (Q2.13)

Table 8.9: To what extent does this school provide nutritional instruction? (Q2.16)

Table 8.10: To what extent does this school provide opportunities for physical education and activity? (Q2.17)

Statewide Comparison Results (2004-06 CSCS)

Staff perceive students physical health related to readiness to learn declines as they age. The percentage of staff that felt nearly all or most students *arrived at school alert and rested* dropped from 69% in ES and 62% in MS to 48% of HS and 31% of CS. There were smaller differences across school types for reporting that nearly all or most students were *healthy and physically fit*. Nevertheless, the declining pattern between elementary (61%) and high school (51%) persisted. In contrast, the percentage indicating that student *depression or other mental health problems* was a moderate-to-severe problem at the school rose from 13% in ES to 31% in HS and 51% in CS. This is among

the largest differences in problem severity rates between HS and CS (along with drug and tobacco use) out of 14 problem indicators.

VI. Student Violence, Harassment, and Substance Use

This section discusses the questions relating to more severe behavioral problems for the school: violence, bullying, delinquency, and substance use. Physical violence and weapons on campus have long been a major public concern. As Barton (2001) reminds us, more attention also needs to be directed toward the adverse effect of less severe disruptive student behaviors — such as substance use and sales on campus, fighting, and harassment. They adversely affect not only students' ability to learn and willingness to attend school but also the overall school environment, the ability of teachers to teach, and the willingness of adults to enter the teaching profession. This situation, he adds, "has attracted almost no national attention…and is not addressed in the standards-based reform movement" (p. 10).

Staff were asked to rate how great a problem (from insignificant to severe) there was at the school due to fourteen student behaviors or conditions. Summary Table S7 provides the percentages reporting each of these fourteen behaviors were moderate or severe problems. Eight of the questions assess violence, crime, bullying, and substance use. Previous sections have discussed the tables related to assessment of disruptive behavior in general, truancy, lack of respect to teachers, and student depression or other mental health problems. This series of questions is designed to provide an overview to factors that typically pose a barrier to learning and teaching. These questions also shed light on: (1) the level of student engagement, as substance use, truancy, violence, and other disruptive behavior can be seen as reflective of lack of engagement; and (2) the factors that might influence the responses on the question on perceived safety (Tables 2.17 and 2.18).

As discussed in Section I, as well as in more detail in the *Guidebook to the CHKS Content*, physical and psychological safety is essential for good learning and teaching. Violence, bullying, and harassment affect not just the individual students who are victimized but also the entire school environment. Violence – and the fear of it – can have devastating, long-lasting effects on young people. It not only puts them at risk of physical injury but also interferes with their successful completion of normal developmental processes. It reduces their ability to concentrate and learn, and thereby their chances for school success. Indeed, emerging evidence suggests exposure to violence has lifelong effects on learning.[70] Equally disruptive are the uncounted acts of bullying, teasing, and nonviolent misbehavior among youth.[71]

A main theme of school-climate research is the reciprocal relationship between misbehavior or antisocial behavior and academic failure. As discussed, school failure contributes to involvement in risk behaviors, and school bonding is a protective factor (see Section 4). Substance abuse interferes with a students ability to study and learn, and violence at school can lead to suspensions and interferes with the ability of other students to concentrate on learning and feel safe at school, further undermining their learning engagement. For example, McEvoy and Walter (2000) write:

> *"We believe not only that academic failure and antisocial behavior exist in a reciprocal relationship, but also that this reciprocal relationship is context specific…Antisocial behavior and academic failure reinforce one another within the context of ineffective school practices and ineffective parenting strategies. Ineffective schooling, for example, can be both a cause and an effect of violent or other antisocial conduct. A pattern of academic failure provides few opportunities for*

70 Prothrow-Stith & Quaday 1996.

71 Juvonen & Graham 2001; Rigby 2001.

the student to receive positive reinforcement. From the failing student's perspective, school then takes on aversive properties that increase the likelihood of escape, rebellion, uncooperativeness, and other negative behaviors. This cycle often results in school failure, dropping out, and involvement in delinquent groups."

Most of these behaviors are also assessed on the CHKS, enabling you to compare staff perceptions with actual self-report from students about the level of their involvement. Given that students who are well connected with their schools are less likely to engage in various high-risk behaviors, including AOD use and aggressive/violent behavior (Resnick et al. 1997), these results should be examined in the context of the data on school connectedness.

Related Questions:

How much of a problem at this school is…

Table 5.2: …cutting classes or being truant? (Q65)

Table 5.3: …lack of respect of staff by students? (Q64)

Table 5.5: …disruptive student behavior? (Q61)

Table 5.9: …student depression or other mental health problems? (Q63)

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Problem severity tends to rise as students aged, peaking in high school. The exceptions are the two relatively less serious indicators of harassment and fighting, which peaked in MS. This is consistent with the general indicator of disruptive behavior being higher in MS than HS. Continuation school rates were lower than high school for five of the seven indicators, consistent with the higher perceived safety rating in CS. (The two exceptions are gang activity and weapons possession, the second of which is very low in both HS and CS.) This contrasts with the higher perception of substance use as problem in continuation than traditional high schools. This pattern may be related to the state requirement (Ed Code) that youth expelled from traditional high schools for violent or criminal activities be referred to community day rather than continuation schools.

PHYSICAL FIGHTING AND BULLYING[72]

Tables 6.1-6.2

Table 6.1: How much of a problem at this school is harassment or bullying among students?[73] (Q59)

Table 6.2: How much of a problem at this school is physical fighting between students?[74] (Q60)

(See also Table S7)

Harassment is a form of violent or abusive behavior that instills a sense of vulnerability, isolation, frustration, and fear among its victims. Threats, intimidation, rumor, and ostracism can cause youth to experience depression or to engage in risk behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, or in avoidance behaviors such as missing school and social isolation. This type of misbehavior, vastly more common than any other, ruins the school day for many students.[75]

72 Section VIII provides data on disciplinary policies and violence prevention.

73 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, how many times on school property were you harassed or bullied for any of the following reasons."

74 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, how many times on school property have you been in a physical fight? … been afraid of being beaten up? …been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked by someone who wasn't just kidding around?"

75 Learning First Alliance 2001.

It can also lead to anger and further violence. In *Bruised Inside*, the National Association of Attorney Generals describes harassment by peers as one of the two causes for kids using guns, knives, and fists to express anger.

Since the first school violence surveys were conducted in the late 1970s, fighting behavior has been a major focus of concern because of the obvious potential for injury and harm, regardless of culpability. Physical fights, if unresolved, can lead to more serious fights involving weapons, or even unintended serious physical injury. They are also a powerful indicator of tension and lack of respect among the students, for whatever reason.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

By far, middle schools reported the highest percentages for harassment or bullying being moderate-severe problems at the school, at 51%, compared to 25% of ES and 38% of HS, with continuation schools in the mid-range at 32%. Overall, this was the violence-related problem that received the highest percentages among traditional schools.

Physical fighting among students at school was considered a moderate-to-severe problem by only 13% of ES staff, doubling to 28% of MS. It then leveled off to 27% in HS and dropped to 20% in CS.

DELINQUENCY

Tables 6.3-6.6

Table 6.3: How much of a problem at this school is gang-related activity?[76] *(Q66)*

Table 6.4: How much of a problem at this school is weapons possession?[77] *(Q67)*

Table 6.5: How much of a problem at this school is vandalism (including graffiti)?[78] *(Q68)*

Table 6.6: How much of a problem at this school is theft?[79] *(Q69)*

(See also Table S7)

Tables 6.3-6.6 addresses four behaviors related to delinquency: vandalism, theft, gang activity, and weapons possession. In California schools, subsequent increases in test scores among both low- and high-performing schools have been smaller in schools with high levels of property theft and vandalism, and of weapon possession (Hanson, Austin, & Lee-Bayha 2004).

Vandalism

Nationally, 100,000 acts of vandalism were reported in 1996-97 among 38% of public schools, and 13% of principals considered it a serious to moderate problem (Burns et al. 1998). In the Safe Schools Study of 1978, one-quarter of all schools suffered from vandalism in a given month, and one-tenth reported property stolen (see Barton, Coley, & Wenglinsky1998)

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76 CHKS student comparison: "Do you consider yourself a member of a gang?"

77 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, how many times on school property have you carried a gun? …carried any other weapon, such as a knife or club? …been threatened or injured with a weapon (gun, knife, club, etc.)? …seen someone carrying a gun, knife, or other weapon?

78 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, how many times on school property have you damaged school property on purpose."

79 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 12 months, how many times on school property have you had your property stolen or deliberately damaged, such as your car, clothing, or books?."

Weapons Possession

Even though educators will not be able to prevent all conflicts from occurring at school, eliminating weapons limits the potential for conflicts to escalate to serious injury or even death. Weapons of any kind on campus are a glaring, powerful symptom of a fundamental interpersonal and structural weakness in the school and community. Guns have been the main focus of public concern because of their potential deadly consequences. A recent study did indicate that most deaths in schools involved the use of firearms.[80] However, knives are generally more common at schools than guns and weapons of any kind have the potential for causing injury and even death.

Although educators and parents are legitimately concerned about students' bringing weapons to school, research has consistently found that they carry weapons more frequently outside of school. YRBS data indicate that weapons possession outside of school is 3 to 4 times more frequent than at school for both males and females.[81] The school and community must address this problem together.

Gang Activity[82]

U.S. Justice Department statistics show that gang members are overall a relatively small – and declining – proportion of the youth population. However, there was evidence of growth in gang activity in small towns and membership among females in the late 1990s.[83] Moreover, violence is still a major part of gang life and the presence of gangs at school is a important indicator of school disorder. For example, research has shown that:

- Gang members commit the majority of serious youth violence.[84]
- A high proportion of gang members are involved in drug sales, a behavior closely linked to serious violence.[85]
- Youths who identify themselves as gang members have been more likely than non-gang members to bring guns to school (in one study four times more likely).[86]
- Rates of violence are higher in schools where gangs are present, in one study almost three times as high.[87]

Consistent with these research findings, an analysis of 1997 California Student Survey revealed that rates of violent behavior were generally twice as high among those students who reported that they had been in a gang compared to non-gang members. In the largest difference, rates for carrying weapons to school were over 3 times higher, reported by about 4 in 10 gang members. Gang membership was also related to poor school adjustment and alcohol and other drug (AOD) use.[88]

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80 Kachur, S. P. et al. (1996).

81 Coggeshall & Kingery (2001).

82 CHKS student comparison: "Do you consider yourself a member of a gang?"

83 *Youth Crime Alert* (2001, November). In 1998, 92% of all gang members were still male (National Youth Gang Center, 2000). On the rise of female involvement, see: Chesney-Lind & Brown 1999; Chesney-Lind, Shelden, & Joe 1996; Snyder & Sickmund 1999.

84 See: Spergel 1990; Thornberry 1998; Battin et al. 1996; Fagan 1990; Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry 1995.

85 The 1999 *National Youth Gang Survey* (a national survey of law enforcement agencies) estimates that 46% of youth gang members are involved in street drug sales (Egley 2000). See also: Huizinga et al. (1995).

86 Cornell & Loper 1998.

87 Snyder & Sickmund 1999. The rate of victimization in schools with gangs was 7.5%, compared to 2.7% in schools without gangs.

88 These findings were further recently confirmed by an analysis of 2007/08 California Student Survey Factsheet #6).

Schools with high levels of gang membership should examine their CHKS data to determine the characteristics of these respondents and how their risk behaviors differ from non-gang members. Schools need to evaluate how much of their violence and related high-risk behaviors are attributable to gang-related activity on campus. They should also consider administering the *CHKS Gang Risk Assessment Module* to obtain more detailed information.

Gang-related incidents of violence may require intervention strategies different from those that might be used with the general student population. This is one reason why assessment of these activities is so important. Gang-related violence is more likely to fill instrumental goals (e.g., power, money, and possession) than other acts of aggression on school campuses, which are more impulsive and reactive in nature. These different types of aggression demand different intervention strategies.[89] Establishing a positive school climate risk in developmental supports and opportunities may be especially important in undermining the appeal of gang membership among students.

Relevance to Closing the Achievement Gap

According to Barton (2003), about twice the percentages of Black and Hispanic students reported that street gangs were present in their schools, as compared with White students. Three in ten of these minority students report the presence of gangs, compared with one in six White students.

Statewide Comparison Data: 2004-06 CSCS

Vandalism/graffiti and theft were selected as moderate-severe problems at school by 15% and 11% of ES, respectively, rising to 34% and 27% of MS, similar to the percentages for fighting in these schools. They rose to 37% and 36% for HS, then dropped to 33% and 22% in CS, about the same level as in MS.

Weapons possession at school received the lowest percentages overall of the fourteen problems, despite it being such a high-profile public concern. There was also a relatively small range across school types. The highest percentages were only 8% in HS and 10% in continuation school.

Gang activity as a moderate or severe problem was cited by a negligible 5% in ES, but then increased to 23% in MS and 29% in HS. Moreover, the percentage jumped to 43% in continuation schools, the highest percentage of any of the seven violence-related problems.

SUBSTANCE USE

Tables 6.7-6.8

Table 6.7: How much of a problem at this school is student alcohol and drug use?[90] *(Q57)*

Table 6.8: How much of a problem at this school is student tobacco use?[91] *(Q58)*

(See also Summary Table S7)

Tables 6.7-6.8 discuss staff perceptions of student alcohol/drug and tobacco use. The misuse of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) continues to be among the most important issues confronting the nation. In the national CASA Teen Survey, adolescents have consistently reported that drug use is the number one problem they face. Similarly, a

89 Dodge & Coie 1987.

90 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 30 days, on how many days on school property did you…have at least one drink of alcohol? …smoke marijuana? …Use any other illegal drug or pill to get "high?"

91 CHKS student comparison: "During the past 30 days, on how many days on school property did you…smoke cigarettes?"

1997 national survey of adults identified drug use by far as the most serious problem facing children, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently declared that substance abuse remains the leading health problem in the United States.[92]

For schools, the problem is particularly relevant. It is estimated that each year substance abuse costs schools at least $41 billion dollars in truancy, special education, and disciplinary problems; disruption; teacher turnover; and property damage (CASA 2001). Evidence drawn from years of research has shown that adolescent substance use is also closely connected with academic success. Adolescents who use drugs have been found to have reduced attention spans, lower investment in homework, lower grades and test scores, more negative attitudes toward school, increased absenteeism, and higher dropout rates.[93] For example:

» Even low levels of alcohol and drug use by peers in middle schools were linked to lower individual state test scores in Washington, compared to students whose peers had little or no substance use involvement.[94]

» Hanson, Austin, and Lee-Bayha (2004) found that California schools with large numbers of students who reported ever being intoxicated or using substances, being intoxicated at school, or being offered drugs at school exhibited smaller gains in test scores than other schools.

What is less clear is *how* substance use, school climate, and academic achievement are related. One explanation is that substance use *contributes* to academic difficulties. Early onset of substance use in particular has been associated with lower school performance over time (e.g., Fleming et al. 2005). Another explanation is that students become more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as substance use as a *consequence* of the frustration and estrangement associated with poor school performance. A third explanation is that substance use and poor academic performance represent just one aspect of a more generalized tendency toward deviance and unconventionality. The research literature provides empirical support for each of these explanations, indicating that substance use and academic performance are complementary or reciprocal – each influences the other (Hanson, Austin and Lee-Bayha 2003; Hanson et al. 2004).

Regardless of the causal relationship, heavy substance use is a fundamental barrier to learning. Substance use interventions need to be a part of efforts to turn around low-performing schools in which high levels of use are evident. It affects not only the individual learning readiness and performance of the individual, but also undermines the overall school climate, particularly the extent to which drugs become available on the school campus. Research consistently shows a high rate of substance use among California students in continuation high schools (Austin & Abe 2002). This raises the issue of the role substance use may play in creating the academic or behavioral problems that resulted in students being referred to continuation schools. On the other hand, it is increasingly evident that a positive school climate is a protective factor associated with lower student substance use at the school level.[95] If a high percentage of staff perceive substance abuse is a moderate or severe problem, the school should implement a student assistance programs designed to assess and provide referral to services to help youth stop or reduce their use (see the discussion on Table 8.2).

92 Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA) 2001; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2002.

93 Braggio & Pishkin 1993 ; Eggert & Herting 1993; Elias et al. 1991; Sculenber et al. 1994.

94 Washington Kids Count 2000.

95 Eitel & Eitel 2004; Kumar et al. 2002; O'Malley et al. 2006; Resnick et al. 1997; Welsh et al. 2000.

Compare staff perceptions of the degree to which substance use is a problem for the school to the level of current AOD use reported by students on the CHKS. The survey provides data on the frequency and level of lifetime and current use in general and in school, as well as indicators of use-related problems and dependency. If students report high levels of use, but staff do not perceive substance use as a problem, it could mean that staff have underestimated use prevalence and likely its adverse impact on learning as well.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Not surprisingly, as students age, staff perceive that substance use poses a greater problem to the school. Use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs were perceived by staff in elementary schools as negligible problems; only 1% reported each to be a moderate or severe. Even in middle schools, only 7-11% selected this option. However, the percentages rose dramatically in high school and, especially, continuation schools. Among both HS and CS, alcohol and drug use were more likely to be perceived as moderate/severe problems than all seven of the violence-related indicators. For alcohol use, the moderate-to-severe problem percentages were 49% in HS and 58% in CS; drug use, 49% and 69%, respectively; and tobacco use, 35% and 62%. For continuation schools, drug use was the top-rated problem. All three substance-use indicators were in the top four of the 14 problem indicators. For high schools, alcohol and drug use were in the top three.

Although tobacco use was perceived as less of a problem than alcohol and drug use by high school staff, it was rated higher than alcohol in continuation schools, and the percentage increase between HS and CS was greater for tobacco than either other substance. Recent CHKS student data underscore this large increase for tobacco use in continuation schools, indicating that tobacco use is now a clear marker among adolescents for risk of involvement for substance use; poor school attendance, grades, and connectedness; and for school violence (Austin et al. 2007).

Related Questions

Table 8.2: This school provides effective confidential support and referral services for students needing help because of substance abuse, violence, or other problems (e.g., a Student Assistance Program). (Q2.9)

VII. Discipline and Counseling

This section discusses questions assessing programs, services, and policies related to discipline and classroom management, as well as counseling and support services. Compare the level of prevention activities and discipline policies with the evidence about the level to which student violence poses a problem to the schools. Additional questions that assess more specifically how punishment is applied are contained in the Learning Supports Module (Section VIII).

DISCIPLINE-RELATED POLICIES AND PRACTICE

Tables 7.1–7.4

Table 7.1: This school clearly communicates to students the consequences of breaking school rules. (Q26)

Table 7.2: This school handles discipline problems fairly. (Q27)

Table 7.3: This school effectively handles student discipline and behavioral problems. (Q28)

Table 7.4: Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in any of the following areas…positive behavioral support and classroom management? (Q45)

(See also Table S8)

Based on the research, Tables 7.1-7.4 asks all staff their perceptions of how clear, fair, and effective are the schools discipline policies, and whether they feel they need more staff development in positive behavioral support and classroom management. The need for ***clarity*** in behavioral expectations and rules, and ***fairness*** in the implementation of discipline, are common themes in the research and policy literature on both delinquency and academic performance (Welsh et al. 2000). Fairness of school discipline policies was one of the factors identified by Catterall (1998) as fostering "academic resilience." The fairness of rules and their enforcement is thus one of the measures typically used in assessing school connectedness (Libbey 2004).

Ma & Willms (1995) argue that clear reasonable rules and sanctions, active and proper enforcement, and positive relationships between students and school staff form the basic elements of a disciplinary climate conducive to academic success (see also Klinger 2000). Mayer and Leone (1999) found that when students knew the rules and consequence, less victimization and disorder occurred in school. Consistent with this research, Gottfredson (2001) determined that delinquency prevention programs that have shown evidence of effectiveness typically set rules, communicate clear expectations for behavior, consistently enforce rules, and provide rewards for rule compliance and punishments for rule infractions.

The Learning First Alliance (2001:14-15) emphasizes that one basic way to improve school climate, safety, and discipline is to communicate a clear, simple, positive message about what students must do to be successful. Rules must also be fairly and consistently enforced according to clearly communicated guidelines and without regard to the class, race, gender, or other demographic characteristics of students. To create such a positive discipline-climate, the Alliance recommends that students and families be given the opportunity to play a central role in determining school rules and how they are communicated and enforced, which further promotes school connectedness and parent involvement (p. 15).

Schools that have poor interactions between administrators and teachers, and are unfair in their disciplinary practices, tend to have more behavioral problems. For example, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985) found that schools with the most disciplinary problems shared similar characteristics, among them inadequate resources for teaching, poor cooperation between teachers and administrators, inactive administrators, teachers' punitive attitudes, and enforcement of inconsistent and unfair rules.

Discipline, Positive School Climates, and Zero Tolerance

It is important to emphasize that establishing discipline is not incompatible with creating a positive school climate that meets the developmental needs of students as well. Research consistently concludes the most effective discipline occurs in the context of promoting positive, caring relationships and school connectedness. Hennen (2005) observes that well-disciplined schools usually balance clearly established and communicated rules of behavior with a climate of concern for students as individuals."

Several questions in the Learning Supports Module assess how strict and punitive are school discipline policies and how directed toward zero tolerance (See Section 8). Table 8.15 reports directly about whether the school enforces zero tolerance. In a related question, Table 8.14 provides the results for the level of agreement that the school punishes first-time violations of alcohol or other drug policies by at least an out-of-school suspension.

"Zero tolerance" generally refers to the strict application, without any leniency or exception, of a harsh penalty, usually expulsion, for behavioral infractions, particularly in regard to drugs and violence, no matter how minor. Overall research has consistently shown that harsh discipline approaches such as zero tolerance can be counterproductive, making students feel less safe; undermining the fostering of a positive school climate and caring, respectful adult relationships, and school connectedness; and increasing dropout rates.[96]

Closing the Achievement Gap

Well-formulated behavioral expectations were one of the features that Luiselli, Putnam, & Handler (2005) identified in a whole-school model for positive behavior support that resulted in improved academic performance in a predominately African-American urban elementary school.

Comparison Statewide Data (2004-06 CSCS)

High schools were the least likely, and elementary and continuations schools the most likely, to communicate rules clearly and discipline fairly and effectively. One-third of HS staff (34%) strongly agreed that the *school communicates clearly the consequences of breaking rules*. The percentage rose in ES and MS to 44% and 43%, respectively, and peaked in CS at 50%.

Among all staff, percentages were about 1.5 times higher in ES and CS for strongly agreeing staff *handled discipline problems fairly* (40% and 43%) than they were in MS and HS (33% and 26%). Similarly, among practitioners, 29% in ES and CS strongly agreed that the school *handled discipline and behavior problems effectively*, 1.6 times the percentage of HS practitioners (18%), with MS again in the mid-range at 24%. These were the lowest percentages in all school levels reported on these three questions.

96 In one exception, Twemlow et al. (2001) found that a zero tolerance program for bullying showed significant reductions in discipline referrals and increases in scores on standardized academic achievement measures.

COUNSELING

Table 7.5

This school provides adequate counseling and support services for students. (Q10)

Table 7.5 reports data on the level of counseling and support services for students. Sugai, Horner, and Gresham (2001) report that, on average, 80% of a school's students come to school able to learn, conform to rules, and follow ordinary social conventions. Another 15%, on average, are able to fit in and succeed with modest additional assistance, such as conflict resolution or emotion-management training. The remaining 5% or so engage in severe and chronic problem behaviors and need more intensive and ongoing help, such as regular individual counseling or placement in alternative programs that provide greater supervision, structure, and support.

Relevance for Closing the Achievement Gap

According to Ascher and Maguire (2007), "Most urban high schools have few counselors. Moreover, many high schools designate individuals with insufficient experience as college counselors. Yet college counselors, as opposed to guidance counselors, are viewed as particularly critical for low-income students, who are typically the first generation in their families to go to college."

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

The percentages of all staff strongly agreeing that the school *provided adequate counseling and support services* for students were fairly similar across traditional schools, ranging from 19% in ES to 25% in MS before dropping to 23% in HS. CS was highest at 30%, no doubt reflecting the greater need for such services among CS students.

VIII. Learning Supports Module: Student services and policies

This section discussions the times that are only answered by the subgroup of respondents who self-identify themselves as providing services or instruction related to health, prevention, discipline, safety, or counseling. These questions assess the level of student programs, supports, services, and teacher professional development in these areas. The results can be compared to the level of need as indicated by staff perceptions (from the first section of the CSCS) and student perceptions (from the CHKS).

MODULE RESPONDENTS

Table 8.1

Number of Respondents

Table 8.1 provides the number of respondents who answered the questions on this module. Keep in mind that these questions are answered by fewer respondents than the first Core section.

COUNSELING AND INTERVENTION SERVICES

Tables 8.2–8.3

Table 8.2: This school provides effective confidential support and referral services for students needing help because of substance abuse, violence, or other problems (e.g., a Student Assistance Program). (Q2.9)

Table 8.3: This school collaborates well with community organizations to help address substance use or other problems among youth. (Q2.1)

(See also Tables S10 and S11)

These questions assess the level to which schools have intervention programs or provide help for students whose behavior places them at risk of school failure, dependency, and other problems, and the level to which it collaborates with the community in these efforts. The most highly recommended strategy to achieve these goals is the Student Assistance Program (SAP), a school-based integrated approach that several states are adopting to identify and link students to behavioral health education, programs, and services in the community to address barriers to learning due to social, behavioral, emotional, and/or mental health issues.[97] A consistent theme in reports on the results of the biennial California Student Survey has been the need for schools and community organizations to collaborate providing intervention services targeting heavy substance users, who are characterized by involvement in multiple risk behaviors and are at high risk of school failure.[98]

In Pennsylvania, a three-year evaluation found that from 60% to 68% of secondary student referred to the program demonstrated improved or stabilized attendance, no further disciplinary suspensions, and promotion to or graduation from high school (Fertman et al. 2003). In Washington, an evaluation of their Prevention Intervention Services Programs documented "dramatic long-term improvements in attendance and grades after participation in the program" (Phillips & Springer 2004). Supporters argue that the model offers schools an efficient, effective, and

97 According to the California Department of Education's Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan database for 2003-04, only 353 of 1298 LEA's report having a SAP. Even this number is probably an over-estimation as considerable confusion exists over the use of this term.

98 Austin & Skager 2007, 2008; Austin et al. 2005.

coordinated solution to help troubled students that ultimately saves schools time and money, rather than adding to the already heavy burdens on them.[99]

If creating a safe, caring, challenging, participatory, and supportive school climate can do much to reduce behaviors that impede learning, schools can't do it alone. Finding a solution to the challenge of addressing noncognitive barriers to learning must involve more than schools and the education system. A comprehensive, collaborative, multidisciplinary approach involving the school, community, and parents is needed. The origins of many of these learning barriers lay beyond the school's reach, and no school system by itself can offer all the resources and supports that students may need to learn and thrive. Stakeholders in all environments that impact youth need to work together to create conditions that foster learning and healthy development. Schools, communities, and other youth-serving agencies such as public health need to work together to build and fund supportive, healthy, and safe environments, rich in protective factors, that meet developmental and learning needs of all youth from birth (Adelman & Taylor 2007). Without collaboration between all sectors that affect the environment and the development of youth, efforts to resolve both the educational and health problems in our state will continue to be severely hampered.

One of the strengths of Student Assistance Programs is precisely that they are designed to link the identification of student needs to the resources in the community that can help meet those needs. To be effective, intervention services must be based on close collaboration with community organizations that can provide the kind of services that students need, but are beyond the mission and expertise of school staff. Further, schools that are plagued with high levels of violence and substance use need to form school-law enforcement partnerships, as these problems reflect the behavior of students in the community as well as the school and must be addressed holistically.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Similar to the results for counseling, about one-fifth of practitioners in all three types of traditional schools, and 28% in continuation schools, strongly agreed that the school provided "effective *confidential support and referral services* for students needing help due to substance abuse, violence or other problems (e.g., a Student Assistance Program)."

CSCS data suggest that law-enforcement collaboration is much more common than help-oriented service-provision. About four-in-ten staff across school types strongly agreed that the school collaborated well with law enforcement. While the majority of staff agree that their school collaborates well with community organizations to address student problems, only about one sixth strongly agreed. One-fifth (21%) of ES and CS practitioners, dropping to 16% of MS and 14% of HS, strongly agreed that the school collaborated well with community organizations to help address substance use or other problems. This was a much lower percentage than that for collaborating with law enforcement.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Table 8.4-8.6

Table 8.4: This school emphasizes helping students with their social, emotional, and behavioral problems? (Q2.14)

99 According to a White Paper (NACA 2003), "No prevention programs in the last 20 years have demonstrated the ability to meet educational goals as much as have Student Assistance Programs."

Table 8.5: To what extent does this school foster youth development, resilience, or asset promotion? (Q2.15)

Table 8.6: To what extent does this school provide character education? (Q2.21)

(See also Tables S10 and S11)

Section III discussed the questions that probed staff perceptions that fundamental developmental supports and opportunities were in place in the school to promote resilience, learning, and well-being. In the Learning Supports Module, practitioners who would be most involved in implementing these three protective factors are asked three related questions dealing with helping students with their social, emotional, and behavioral problems; fostering youth development; and providing character education. Although character education is a field in and of itself, at its basic character education aims to promote the realization of one's positive development as a person—intellectually, socially, emotionally, and ethically. The goal of character education is to raise good children: youth who understand, care about, and act upon the core ethical values (such as diligence, compassion, integrity, and fairness) that make for a productive, just, and democratic society — youth who desire to do their best and are concerned about the welfare of others (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis 2003; Berkowitz & Bier 2005).

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Mirroring the pattern in staff perceptions of the presence of developmental assets in their school environments, ES and CS practitioners were generally the most likely, and HS the least likely, to respond positively about the amount of youth development services provided. Over one-fourth in ES (28%) and CS (26%) answered that the school *fostered a lot of youth development, resilience or asset promotion*, about 1.7 times higher than reported in HS (15%). Percentages were similar for providing a lot of *character education,* a related indicator, but they were higher in ES (37%) and lower in HS (11%).

HEALTH SERVICES AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Tables 8.7–8.11

Table 8.7: The school provides adequate health services for students. (Q2.12)

Table 8.8: The school provides students with healthy food choices. (Q2.13)

Table 8.9: To what extent does this school provide nutritional instruction? (Q2.16)

Table 8.10: To what extent does this school provide opportunities for physical education and activity? (Q2.17)

(See also Tables S10 and S11)

Schools are in a unique position to convey information about health and also provide opportunities for students to practice health-promoting skills and routines. Section V discussed the questions assessing staff perceptions of two areas of student physical health related learning readiness: whether they arrive at school alert and rested (Table 5.6) and whether they are healthy and physically fit (Table 5.7). Tables 8.7-8.10 contain four questions asking about services and programs related to physical health promotion.

Compare the level of service your schools provide with the CHKS and other data about student health. CSCS/CHKS information can be used to assist program developers in creating comprehensive health-promotion programs aimed at the specific needs of their school populations. Equally important, these results can be used to educate adults in the school and community about the importance of encouraging and modeling positive eating and exercise habits,

particularly given the incidence of obesity in youth nationwide. As behavioral learning theories indicate, we learn from what we observe around us.

Successful health-promotion messages emphasize the close link between diet, physical activity, and mental health to school and life success. Young people begin to establish health behaviors in childhood and adolescence. They need to see the relationship between a healthy body and a healthy mind. Moreover, research indicates that prevention messages targeting drug use and violence are most effective when delivered in the context of an overall healthy-lifestyle approach. Youth need positive reasons to not use substances.

A comprehensive approach to health, targeting the whole child, to help them develop robustly and thrive, is also important for schools to improve student attendance, behavior, and achievement. Promoting healthy personal habits, providing for enjoyable physical activities, and offering good food choices are just as important to school success and positive youth development as keeping youth safe and drug-free. Students who are hungry or sick cannot function in the classroom, no matter how good the school. Students who eat well and exercise regularly are better able to maintain the energy levels needed for learning and to maintain positive emotional development.

In a 1990 Carnegie Foundation survey, more than half of teachers reported that poor nourishment among students was a problem at their school.[100] Poor dietary patterns have been shown to significantly affect student achievement by reducing cognitive development and school performance. Well-nourished children learn better, perform higher on standardized test scores, are less apathetic and lethargic, and have better attendance rates at school. Among teenage girls, poor eating habits often result in iron-deficiency anemia, which has been linked to lower scores on a wide range of tests, including developmental scales, intelligence tests, and tasks of specific cognitive function.

Regular physical activity among young people contributes to improved physical, mental, and emotional health, lower rates of risk behavior, and positive academic outcomes. Youth engaged in positive activities such as physical activity are also less likely to engage in negative health behaviors.[101] Unfortunately, physical activity levels in schools have also declined, along with physical activity levels in general, especially across the high school grades. From 1991 to 1995, the percentage of students who engaged in high school physical education declined from 42% to 25%.

- The 2001 Fitness Results for California Students found that nearly half of 5th, 7th, and 9th graders were unable to achieve the minimum fitness standard for aerobic capacity, the major indicator of physical fitness.[102]
- The YRBS found that 56% of U.S. High School students (79% of 9th graders but only 37% of 12th graders) were enrolled in a physical education class in 1999.[103]
- The American Association for the Child's Right to Play further estimates that 40% of schools in the United States have either cut recess or are considering doing so.[104]

100 Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 1990.

101 Analyzing YRBS data, Pate et al. (1996) found that low physical activity among adolescents was associated with cigarette smoking, marijuana use, lower fruit and vegetable consumption, greater television watching, and failure to wear a seat belt.

102 California Department of Education 2001.

103 Kann et al. 2000.

104 American Association for Child's Right to Play. URL: http://www.ipausa.org/recess.htm.

Critics of reductions in opportunities for physical activity in school, usually to allow for more instruction time, argue that children are not wired to sit for hours at their desks. They learn best with frequent breaks. Reducing opportunities for physical activity also sends the wrong message when childhood obesity is at epidemic proportions.

A healthy body supports a healthy mind. Schools that offer intense physical activity programs have shown positive effects on academic achievement—increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and reduced disruptive behavior—even when the physical education reduces the time for academics.[105] In one program, when academic class time was reduced by 240 minutes per week to allow for increased physical activity, mathematics test scores were consistently higher than for those not in the program.[106]

Relevance for Closing the Achievement Gap

Rothstein (2006) argues, "Without adequate health care for lower-class children and their parents, there is little hope of fully closing the achievement gap. … Because many lower-class children have health problems that impede earning, quality education cannot be delivered to these children without adequate medical care."(p.4)

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Across school types, only 14%-19% of staff strongly agreed that the school provided *adequate health services* for students. Only 8%-14% strongly agreed that *healthy food* ***choices*** were available (8%-14%). With both measures, the lowest rates were in HS and CS Although the majority of staff in all school types indicated that at least some *nutritional instruction* occurred, only about 10% of practitioners overall reported that there was a lot of it. Physical education or activity peaked in MS, with 72% reporting a lot occurred. Percentages dropped to just over half among HS (55%) and to only 26% among CS.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Table 8.11

To what extent does this school provide services for students with disabilities or other special needs? (Q2.23)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) stipulates that schools provide "a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living." This question provides data on the level of service provision as viewed by staff. More detailed information about special education services is provided by the Special Education Supports Module, as discussed in Section IX.

Statewide Comparison Data (200406 CSCS)

The percentage of practitioners reporting that their schools provided a lot of services for students with disabilities or other special needs rose from 56% in ES to 60% in HS, and then dropped by almost half to 34% among CS. This is one of the few examples from the service-related questions in the Learning Supports Module in which the percentage increased as students aged and was lower in CS than HS.

105 Symons et al. 1997.

106 Shephard 1997; Shephard et al. 1984; Sallis et al. 1999; Nagya 2000.

Tables 8.12-8.16

Table 8.12: This school considers sanctions for student violations of rules and policies on case-by-case basis with a wide range of options. (Q2.5)

Table 8.13: This school collaborates well with law enforcement organizations. (Q2.2)

Table 8.14: This school punishes first-time violations of alcohol or other drug policies by at least an out-of-school suspension. (Q2.6)

Table 8.15: This school enforces zero tolerance policies. (Q2.7)

Table 8.16: This school effectively handles student discipline and behavioral problems. (Q2.10)

(See also Tables S10 and S11)

Tables 8.12-8.16 assess how strict and punitive are school discipline policies and how directed they are toward zero tolerance. Table 8.15 asks directly about whether the school enforces zero tolerance. In a related question, Table 8.14 provides the results for the level of agreement that the school punishes first-time violations of alcohol or other drug policies by at least an out-of-school suspension, a common zero-tolerance policy.

"Zero tolerance" generally refers to the strict application, without any leniency or exception, of a harsh penalty for specific behavior, usually an infraction of drug use and safety policies, no matter how minor. Typically it requires expulsion for the first occurrence of an infraction. The approach seeks to make schools safer. Yet, overall research has consistently shown that zero tolerance can be counterproductive, and can actually undermine the fostering of a positive school climate. Students in schools with harsh discipline policies report feeling *less safe* at school, or at least no safer, than do students in schools with more moderate policies.[107] In contrast, a growing body of research is supporting that promoting school connectedness or bonding, which we have seen is linked to environments rich in the three developmental supports and opportunities, is powerfully effective in reducing delinquency and problem behaviors in school.[108] (As discussed in the next section, similar problems have been observed in schools that try to promote safety through heavy campus security measures.)

For example, Comer and Poussaint (1992) argue that harsh consequences for the first violation of school policy creates an authoritarian environment in which students feel less connected. Hester, Gable, and Manning (2003) observe that when schools employ reactive, punitive approaches, they may have short-term success but fail to teach students more acceptable replacement behavior. There is a high probability that misbehavior will recur and it will negatively affect staff-student relationships.

Skiba and Peterson (1999) outline the results of the NCES study of school violence and found that schools that offer zero tolerance policies are still less safe than those without such policies. Schools with no reported crime were 74% less likely to have a zero tolerance policy than schools that reported incident of serious crime (84%). They conclude: "Virtually no data suggest that zero tolerance policies reduce school violence, and some data suggest that certain

107 Ayers et al. 2001; Skiba 2000, 2001; NcNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum 2002; Verdugo 2000. In one exception, Twemlow et al. (2001) found that a zero tolerance program for bullying showed significant reductions in discipline referrals and increases in scores on standardized academic achievement measures.

108 Cernkovich & Girdano 1992; Elliot, Ageton & Cantor 1979; Henry 2007; Resnick, Bearman & Udry 1997; O'Donnel, Hawkins, & Abott 1995; Simons-Morton et al. 1999; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller 1992; McBride et al. 1995

strategies, such as strip searches or undercover agents in school, may create emotional harm or encourage students to drop out."

McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum (2002), analyzing Add Health data, found that, despite their intent, students in schools with harsh discipline policies report feeling less safe at school than do students in schools with more moderate policies. The overall level of school connectedness is also lower in schools that temporarily expel students for relatively minor infractions such as possessing alcohol, compared to schools with more lenient discipline policies. They argue that schools can benefit by adopting policies that are shown to be highly effective at both ensuring safety and promoting positive school climate simultaneously. This Add Health Study found that the overall level of school connectedness, which correlated with lower health risk involvement, was lower in schools that temporarily expel students for relatively minor infractions such as possessing alcohol (although there is a value judgment here in call this "relatively minor"), compared to schools with more lenient discipline policies. When students were permanently expelled for the first occurrence of an infraction, connectedness was even lower.

McEvoy & Walker (2000) observe that schools characterized by low achievement and high levels of antisocial behavior often rely upon suspension and expulsion as preferred means of social control. Although this is appropriate for serious infractions (e.g., felonies involving assaults on students or teachers), they too find little empirical evidence to support their effective use with most disruptive students. In interactions between adults and students, suspension and expulsion usually exacerbate the difficulties of establishing the bonds necessary to manage behavior and to enhance commitment to academic achievement. They emphasize that if we wish to modify patterns of antisocial behavior and academic achievement, *we must find ways to keep students in school*.[109] Cassidy and Jackson (2005), using student self-report data, discuss the adverse consequences in marginalizing, diminishing, and excluding youth without considering root causes of negative behavior.

In short, discipline must be applied in the context of an overall approach that is focused on creating a positive, caring, and engaging school climate and is perceived as fair and respectful. Skiba, Rausch, & Ritter (2005) describe ways to maintain school safety and academic integrity without emphasizing suspension and expulsion. The Learning First Alliance (2001) stresses that students need opportunities to learn from and correct mistakes, and that punishment for violations should be delivered in the context of a clearly articulated educational message.

Relevance for Closing the Achievement Gap

In a study of a high-achieving middle school for Latino students in poverty, Davis and Pokomy (2004) observed that teachers were successful in maintaining both a high level of discipline and a caring culture.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

There appeared to be a preference among respondents for endorsement of punitive or enforcement-related options as compared to more flexible and therapeutic approaches to student problems. The three most-agreed-upon options of 13 service and policy questions were for punishment- or enforcement-related approaches. Collaborating well with law enforcement led the list, followed by suspension for first-time AOD violations, and enforcing zero tolerance.

109 Walker et al. (1996) argued in favor of providing a continuum of alternative placements for students who exhibit serious problem behaviors. Sustained follow-up of these students, we believe, is also essential once they are returned to their classroom or school of origin.

» Leading the list, around four-in-ten staff across all schools strongly agreed that the school *collaborated well with law enforcement,* with the lowest rate in ES (36%) and the highest in CS (43%). Compared to collaborating well with community organizations to address substance use or other problems, percentages for law-enforcement collaboration were over 1.5 times higher among ES, over 2.5 times higher among MS and HS, and about 2 times higher among CS.

» Similarly, 40% of MS and CS staff strongly agreed that their students were punished by at least an out-of-school *suspension for first time violations of alcohol/drug policies*, compared to 34% in HS. These percentages are 1.5 to 2 times higher than for strongly agreeing that services were provided for students needing help due to substance abuse or violence.

» About one-third of staff and practitioners across schools strongly agreed that the school enforced *zero tolerance* policies. The exception to this was HS, where one-quarter of staff strongly agreed.

» Lower percentages were reported for strongly agreeing that the school showed *flexibility in handling violation sanctions* ("on a case-by-case basis with a wide range of options"). These percentages declined from three-in-ten practitioners in ES and CS (29-30%) to 16% in HS. This drop by almost half between ES and HS is the widest difference in this series of discipline questions across school types.

SAFETY PROMOTION & VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Tables 8.17–8.20

Table 8.17: This school has sufficient resources to create a safe campus. (Q2.3)

Table 8.18: This school seeks to maintain a secure campus through such means as metal detectors, security guards, or personal searches. (Q2.8)

Table 8.19: To what extent does this school provide harassment or bullying prevention? (Q2.22)

Table 8.20: To what extent does this school provide conflict resolution or behavior management instruction? (Q2.20)

(See also Tables S10 and S11)

These four questions provide added insight into school efforts to promote safety and reduce violence and victimization. Table 8.17 contains the results for whether staff feel the school has sufficient resources to create a safe campus. Compare these results with the data on the level of the problems they have experienced related to safety. The three other questions explore prevention strategies: campus security efforts, harassment/bullying prevention, and conflict resolution. The negative effect of harassment and bullying on students is discussed in Section VI. Compare the level of harassment prevention (Table 8.19) with the level to which staff see harassment as a problem (Table 6.1), and the results for conflict resolution (Table 8.20) with those for student fighting being a problem (Table 6.2).

Similar to the data on zero tolerance, Mayer and Leone (1999) found that lockdown campus security efforts can be counterproductive. In schools that ran secure buildings, including metal detectors, security guards, and staff watching hallways, there was more victimization and disorder such as fights and theft, and students reported feeling less safe. They conclude: "Creating an unwelcoming, almost jail-like, heavily scrutinized environment may foster the violence and disorder school administrators hope to avoid. Overall, the model may suggest that less attention

should be paid to running schools in an overly restrictive manner and rather, schools should concentrate on communication of individual responsibility to students."

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

About one-fifth of practitioners, with the exception of 29% in ES, thought their school had *sufficient resources* to create a safe campus. Few schools engaged in "lock-down" procedures. Only 6% of ES, and topping out at 15% of CS, strongly agreed that the school sought to *maintain a secure campus* through such means as metal detectors, guards, or personal searches.

There was a disconnect between need and program delivery regarding bullying and conflict prevention. As noted, half of middle school staff reported the harassment was a moderate-to-severe problem at the school, by far the highest of all school types, followed by high schools, and then elementary schools at 25%. Practitioners reported the highest rates for providing a lot of *harassment or bullying prevention* occurred in elementary school at 25%; MS ranked next, at 19%; and the lowest rate occurred in HS at 10%. A similar pattern was found for the school providing a lot of *conflict resolution or behavior management*, with percentages dropping from 30% in ES, to 23% in MS, and 19% in HS).

Related Questions

Tables 2.17-18: This school is a safe place for students? …for staff? (Q29-30)

Tables 6.1-4: How much of a problem at this school is harassment or bullying among students? …is physical fighting between students? …is gang-related activity? is weapons possession? (Q59-60, 66-67)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

Tables 8.21-8.24

Table 8.21: This school considers substance abuse prevention an important goal. (Q2.11)

Table 8.22: To what extent does this school provide alcohol or drug use prevention instruction? (Q2.18)

Table 8.23: To what extent does this school provide tobacco use prevention instruction? (Q2.19)

Table 8.24: This school has sufficient resources to address substance use prevention needs. (Q2.4)

(See also Tables S10 and S11)

Tables 8.21-8.24 assess what the school is doing directly in response to substance abuse: the priority given to prevention, the sufficiency of the resources, and level of prevention instruction provided. As noted in Section VI (Tables 6.7-8), CSCS data reveal that high school staff consider substance use one of the most severe problems that their schools face. Compare these results with the degree that staff perceive that substance use was a problem and the level to which students reported being involved in substance use on the CHKS. Over time, if the problem indicators remain unchanged or increase without improvements in the prevention-related questions, more attention needs to be directed to raising awareness about the importance of prevention and improving services and improving these services.

Statewide Comparison Data (2004-06 CSCS)

Across substance use prevention indicators, the highest provision rates occurred among CS, followed closely by ES. HS had the lowest rates, despite student reports of the pronounced increase that occurs in substance use

and staff reports of the pronounced increase in the severity this use poses to the school. That CS percentages are not appreciably different from ES, even though the seriousness of the problem is so much greater among CS students and schools, raises important questions about the sufficiency of these services as well. These limitations in prevention services are consistent with the previously reported results for intervention services and community collaboration in addressing substance use and other problems.

- For strongly agreeing that substance abuse prevention is an important goal, percentages were about 1.5 times higher in ES (29%) and CS (32%) than in MS (22%) and HS (18%).
- Consistent with these differences, 17% of ES and 19% of CS staff responded that their school provided a lot of alcohol and drug prevention instruction — amounts that were over 1.5 times higher than that of HS (11%).
- ES were the most likely, and HS were the least likely, at half the percentage of ES (10% vs. 22%), to strongly agree that they had sufficient resources to address substance use prevention needs. Even in CS the percentage was almost half that of ES, at 13%. At all school levels, these percentages were lower than for having sufficient resources to maintain a safe campus. In the case of high schools, they were lower by half.

Related Questions

Table 6.7: How much of a problem at this school is student alcohol and drug use? (Q57)

IX. Special Education Supports Module

Three questions previously discussed asked about special education services to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Tables 2.15 and 2.16 provide data on the provision of services and perceived need for more professional development in meeting their needs. Table 8.10 provided staff assessment of the extent to which the school provided services for students with disabilities or other special needs. The third section of the survey consists of a 24-question *Special Education Supports Module* (SESM) designed to be answered by staff who have responsibilities for teaching or providing related support services to students with IEPs. It provides data about the perceptions and concerns of special education staff to guide program and service improvement, particularly in how to: (1) effectively meet the needs of students with IEPs; and (2) create a supportive, positive working environment for all staff. Recruitment and retention of teachers and other personnel has become a major barrier to efforts to meet the needs of youth with IEPs. Research conducted by nationally and in California has suggested that workplace conditions, control over the workload, and perceptions about administrative support are highly correlated with teacher attrition rates.

The recent amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) were designed to ensure that services to students with disabilities provide "a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living." The amendments align IDEA with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB 2001), which focuses on accountability and use of evidence-based practices serving for all students. Other key provisions require that all children be served by highly-qualified staff and that local education agencies demonstrate ability to recruit, hire, train and retain highly-qualified special education teachers.[110]

In 2007, California implemented a renewed Strategic Action Plan which was broadly aimed at examining practices related to the recruitment, training, and retention of special education teachers. It focused on data-gathering efforts related to: (a) school climate, (b) administrative support, and (c) working conditions. The SESM is an outgrowth of this process. One pivotal study influencing it was Futernick's (2007) survey of factors affecting teacher retention in California. It suggested a number of factors negatively impact teaching and learning conditions for students with IEPs, particularly with regard to students served in inner cities with highly diverse student populations and those in high poverty areas. Many teachers reported that they initially entered the field of education because they dreamed of "making a difference." However, many ended up leaving due to the realities of a workplace where conditions did not support the dream. Futernick offered general recommendations to:

- reduce unnecessary burdens imposed by IEP's and related paperwork,
- cultivate better collegial supports for special educators, and
- expand programs that support novice special educators.

The SESM questions are based on Futernick's (2007) research categories. While many of the factors related to retention for teachers in general and special education were the same in this study, there are specific school conditions that are uniquely problematic for teachers of special education. His study suggests that many special

110 34 CFR 300.156(d)] [20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(14)(D)] require states to assure that LEA's take ***"take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train and retain highly qualified personnel to provide special education and related services."***

education teachers enter the profession as under-qualified and many who are qualified leave the field prematurely. Specifically, he noted that inadequate system supports, bureaucratic impediments, lack of collegial supports and inadequate compensation are critical to teachers of students in special education programs. These are the categories of questions on the SESM, as discussed below.

RESPONDENT NUMBER AND BACKGROUND

Table 9.1

Module Sample and Number of Respondents

Tables 9.2–9.5

Table 9.2: What is your highest degree level? (Q3.1)

Table 9.3: What credential(s) do you currently hold? (Mark all that apply) (Q3.2)

Table 9.4: What is the highest level of the credential or permit for your current position? (Q3.3)

Table 9.5: What best describes the PRIMARY service setting for students with IEPs that you serve? (Q3.4)

(See also Table S12)

Table 9.1 provides the number of respondents who answered the questions on this module, the third section of the survey. Keep in mind that these questions are answered by fewer respondents than the first Core section. In most schools, there are only a few individuals who are specifically designated as "special education teachers." As discussed in the Introduction, to preserve confidentiality, data are not reported if there are less than *five (5) respondents* in a given report level so that the anonymity of individual respondents can be maintained. It should also be noted that the representativeness of the results is directly related to the overall response rate for a given site, and samples can be skewed if certain groups of respondents are disproportionally represented in the findings.

As noted, Futernick's (2007) research study suggested that many special education teachers enter the profession as under-qualified. Table 9.2 provides the data on the educational level and credentials of the respondents, and the primary service setting in which they worked. These questions are asked to:

- Help you determine the training qualifications of the sample respondents compared to the school staff as a whole,
- Enable you to analyze how perceptions of school climate vary by subgroups of credential and certificated staff; and
- Enable CDE to analyze local and state level differences in the results based on credential types and levels
- Compare staff perceptions regarding special education services based on the *primary* settings in which those services are provided.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Tables 9.6–9.8

Table 9.6: This school works to reduce interruptions to instruction for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). (Q3.6)

Table 9.7: This school takes steps to minimize required paperwork. (Q3.7)

Table 9.8: This school effectively schedules legally mandated special education activities (e.g., assessments, behavior supports, mandated meetings with parents). (Q3.10)

(See also Table S12)

Three questions (Tables 9.6-8) assess "bureaucratic" barriers to effective service delivery and major sources of job dissatisfaction typically reported by special educators. Some of the key features from Futerick's (2007) research suggest that, in particular, many special education teachers experience disruptions during instructional time and excess paperwork which contribute to their leaving the field. Table 9.8 further assesses whether the school effectively schedules legally mandated special education activities. Futernick (2007:2) noted " these impediments actually prevented teachers from doing their job. These problem(s)….do not just drive teachers crazy; they drive many of them right out of the classroom."

INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION

Tables 9.9–9.13

Table 9.9: This school integrates special education into its daily operations. (Q3.5)

Table 9.10: This school encourages teaming between general and special education personnel. (Q3.8)

Table 9.11: This school provides sufficient time to collaborate with colleagues regarding services to students with IEPs. (Q3.9)

Table 9.12: This school views service to students with IEPs as a shared responsibility among all staff. (Q3.22)

Table 9.13: This school promotes personnel participation in decision-making that affects school practices and policies. (Q3.24)

(See also Table S12)

Tables 9.9-13 have data related to perceptions about collegial relationships and collaboration, which have been consistently reported by both general and special educators as key factors in teacher attrition rates. Collegiality encompasses common membership in a community, commitment to a common cause, and shared professional values. A sense of "community" and "community achievement" are necessary for meaningful collegiality (Abdallah 2009).

Likewise, findings from Futernick's retention study suggested that while progress has been made to include students with IEP's into general education settings, far less progress has been made to fully integrate special education *teachers* with their general education colleagues. "Special educators often feel isolated and ignored, and many find themselves at odds with school principals and their general education colleagues when advocating for their special education students. This aspect of special education is a *significant contributor to the high turnover rate among special educators*" (Futernick, 2007, p. 10).

EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORTS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Tables 9.14–9.18

Table 9.14: This school sets high expectations for students with IEPs. (Q3.14)

Table 9.15: This school provides effective supports for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students with IEPs.

(Q3.15)

Table 9.16: This school provides effective supports for students needing alternative modes of communication. (Q3.16)

Table 9.17: This school provides complete state adopted instructional materials for students with IEPs. (Q3.18)

Table 9.18: This school has sufficient resources to support special education programs and services. (Q3.23)

(See also Table S12)

Tables 9.14 -18 provide information related to perceptions about expectations and culturally responsive supports for students with IEP's. Questions also focus on adequate access to instructional materials and the sufficiency of resources. Compare the results for setting high expectations for students with IEPS (Table 9.14) with the questions related to high expectations in Tables 3.4 and 3.5 Compare the supports for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse IEP students with those evident in Section 4 for the general population (use of culturally relevant instructional materials in Table 4.6.

PERSONNEL SUPPORTS

Table 9.19-9.25

Table 9.19: This school provides a positive working environment for staff who serve students with IEPs. (Q3.11)

Table 9.20: This school acknowledges the responsibilities for staff who serve students with IEPs. (Q3.12)

Table 9.21: This school provides relevant training for paraprofessionals. (Q3.13)

Table 9.22: This school has a climate that encourages me to continue in my role of service to students with IEPs. (Q3.17)

Table 9.23: This school provides adequate access to technology for staff who serve students with IEPs. (Q3.19)

Table 9.24: This school has good communication with district personnel to support students with IEPs. (Q3.20)

Table 9.25: This school offers adequate benefits (e.g. salary, fringe and retirement options) to support my continued employment at this school. (Q3.21)

(See also Table S12)

Tables 9.19 - 25 provide information related to the responsibilities and working environment for *staff*. They also address the adequacy of access to technology, training for paraprofessionals, communication with district personnel, perceptions about the adequacy of compensation, and the overall climate for continued employment. Compare these results with the data on staff perceptions about the school climate and collegiality in Section 1.

Related Questions

Table 2.15: This school provides the materials, resources, and training (professional development) needed to work with special education (IEP) students (Q15)

Table 2.16: Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship, or other support to do your job in….serving special education (IEP) students (Q48).

Table 8.10. To what extent does this school provide services for students with disabilities or other special needs (Q2.23)

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Appendix A: Index to CSCS Report Table Numbers from Survey Question Numbers

	Question	Report Table
1.	What is your role(s) at this school?	1.2
2.	Do you provide services to the following types of students?	1.3
3.	How many years have you worked, in any position, at this school?	1.4
4.	How many years have you worked at any school in your current position (e.g., teacher, counselor, administrator, food service)?	1.5
5.	What is your race or ethnicity?	1.6
6.	This school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn.	2.1
7.	This school sets high standards for academic performance for all students.	2.2
8.	This school promotes academic success for all students.	2.3
9.	This school emphasizes helping students academically when they need it.	2.4
10.	This school provides adequate counseling and support services for students.	7.5
11.	This school emphasizes teaching lessons in ways relevant to students.	2.5
12.	This school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work.	2.6
13.	This school promotes trust and collegiality among staff.	2.9
14.	This school provides the materials, resources, and training (professional development) needed to do your job effectively.	2.11
15.	This school provides the materials, resources, and training (professional development) needed to work with special education (IEP) students.	2.15
16.	This school encourages opportunities for students to decide things like class activities or rules.	3.6
17.	This school gives all students equal opportunity to participate in classroom discussions or activities.	3.7
18.	This school gives all students equal opportunity to participate in numerous extracurricular and enrichment activities.	3.8
19.	This school gives students opportunities to "make a difference" by helping other people, the school, or the community (e.g., service learning).	3.9
20.	This school encourages students to enroll in rigorous courses (such as honors and AP), regardless of their race, ethnicity, or nationality.	4.9
21.	This school emphasizes using instructional materials that reflect the culture or ethnicity of its students.	4.6
22.	This school has staff examine their own cultural biases through professional development or other processes.	4.7
23.	This school considers closing the racial/ethnic achievement gap a high priority.	4.8
24.	This school fosters an appreciation of student diversity and respect for each other.	4.1
25.	This school emphasizes showing respect for all students' cultural beliefs and practices.	4.5
26.	This school clearly communicates to students the consequences of breaking school rules.	7.1
27.	This school handles discipline problems fairly.	7.2
28.	This school effectively handles student discipline and behavioral problems.	7.3

	Question	Report Table
29.	This school is a safe place for students.	2.17
30.	This school is a safe place for staff.	2.18
31.	This school is welcoming to and facilitates parent involvement.	2.20
32.	This school has clean and well-maintained facilities and property.	2.19
33.	How many adults at this school really care about every student?	3.1
34.	How many adults at this school acknowledge and pay attention to students?	3.2
35.	How many adults at this school want every student to do their best?	3.4
36.	How many adults at this school listen to what students have to say?	3.3
37.	How many adults at this school believe that every student can be a success?	3.5
38.	How many adults at this school treat all students fairly?	4.3
39.	How many adults at this school treat every student with respect?	4.4
40.	How many adults at this school have close professional relationships with one another?	2.10
41.	How many adults at this school support and treat each other with respect?	2.8
42.	How many adults at this school feel a responsibility to improve this school?	2.7
43.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in meeting academic standards?	2.12
44.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in evidence-based methods of instruction?	2.13
45.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in positive behavioral support and classroom management?	7.4
46.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in working with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural groups?	4.11
47.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in culturally relevant pedagogy for the school's student population?	4.12
48.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in serving English language learners?	4.13
49.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in closing the achievement gap?	4.10
50.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in serving special education (IEP) students?	2.16
51.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in meeting the social, emotional, and developmental needs of youth (e.g., resilience promotion)?	3.10
52.	Do you feel that you need more professional development, training, mentorship or other support to do your job in creating a positive school climate?	2.14
53.	Based on your experience, how many students at this school are healthy and physically fit?	5.7
54.	Based on your experience, how many students at this school arrive at school alert and rested?	5.6
55.	Based on your experience, how many students at this school are motivated to learn?	5.1
56.	Based on your experience, how many students at this school are well-behaved?	5.4

	Question	Report Table
57.	How much of a problem at this school is student alcohol and drug use?	6.7
58.	How much of a problem at this school is student tobacco use?	6.8
59.	How much of a problem at this school is harassment or bullying among students?	6.1
60.	How much of a problem at this school is physical fighting between students?	6.2
61.	How much of a problem at this school is disruptive student behavior?	5.5
62.	How much of a problem at this school is racial/ethnic conflict among students?	4.2
63.	How much of a problem at this school is student depression or other mental health problems?	5.8
64.	How much of a problem at this school is lack of respect of staff by students?	5.3
65.	How much of a problem at this school is cutting classes or being truant?	5.2
66.	How much of a problem at this school is gang-related activity?	6.5
67.	How much of a problem at this school is weapons possession?	6.6
68.	How much of a problem at this school is vandalism (including graffiti)?	6.3
69.	How much of a problem at this school is theft?	6.4
	Section 2 (Learning Supports Module)	
2.01	This school has well-understood procedures to deal with crises.	—
2.02	This school collaborates well with community organizations to help address substance use or other problems among youth.	8.3
2.03	This school collaborates well with law enforcement organizations.	8.13
2.04	This school has sufficient resources to create a safe campus.	8.17
2.05	This school has sufficient resources to address substance use prevention needs.	8.24
2.06	This school considers sanctions for student violations of rules and policies on a case-by-case basis with a wide range of options.	8.12
2.07	This school punishes first-time violations of alcohol or other drug policies by at least an out-of-school suspension.	8.14
2.08	This school enforces zero tolerance policies.	2.15
2.09	This school seeks to maintain a secure campus through such means as metal detectors, security guards, or personal searches.	8.18
2.10	This school provides effective confidential support and referral services for students needing help because of substance abuse, violence, or other problems (e.g., a Student Assistance Program).	8.2
2.11	This school provides adequate professional development opportunities for staff on how to deal with the social, emotional, and developmental needs of youth.	(See 3.10)*
2.12	This school effectively handles student discipline and behavioral problems.	8.16
2.13	This school considers substance abuse prevention an important goal.	8.21
2.14	To what extent does this school foster youth development, resilience, or asset promotion?	8.5
2.15	To what extent does this school provide nutritional instruction?	8.9
2.16	To what extent does this school provide opportunities for physical education and activity?	8.10
2.17	To what extent does this school provide alcohol or drug use prevention instruction?	8.22
2.18	To what extent does this school provide tobacco use prevention instruction?	8.23

	Question	Report Table
2.19	To what extent does this school provide conflict resolution or behavior management instruction?	8.20
2.20	To what extent does this school provide character education?	8.6
2.21	To what extent does this school provide harassment or bullying prevention?	8.19
2.22	To what extent does this school provide services for students with disabilities or other special needs?	8.11
2.23	This school provides adequate health services for students.	8.7
2.24	This school provides students with healthy food choices.	8.8
2.25	This school emphasizes helping students with their social, emotional, and behavioral problems.	8.4
	Section 3 (Special Education Supports Module)	
3.01	What is your highest degree level?	9.2
3.02	What credential(s) do you currently hold?	9.3
3.03	What is the highest level of the credential or permit for your current position?	9.4
3.04	What best describes the primary service setting for students with IEPs that you serve?	9.5
3.05	This school integrates special education into its daily operations.	9.9
3.06	This school works to reduce interruptions to instruction for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).	9.6
3.07	This school takes steps to minimize required paperwork.	9.7
3.08	This school encourages teaming between general and special education personnel.	9.10
3.09	This school provides sufficient time to collaborate with colleagues regarding services to students with IEPs.	9.11
3.10	This school effectively schedules legally mandated special education activities (e.g., assessments, behavior supports, mandated meetings with parents).	9.8
3.11	This school provides a positive working environment for staff who serve students with IEPs.	9.19
3.12	This school acknowledges the responsibilities for staff who serve students with IEPs.	9.20
3.13	This school provides relevant training for paraprofessionals.	9.21
3.14	This school sets high expectations for students with IEPs.	9.14
3.15	This school provides effective supports for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students with IEPs.	9.15
3.16	This school provides effective supports for students needing alternative modes of communication (e.g., manual signs, communication boards, computer-based devices, picture exchange systems, Braille).	9.16
3.17	This school has a climate that encourages me to continue in my role of service to students with IEPs.	9.22
3.18	This school provides complete state adopted instructional materials for students with IEPs.	9.17
3.19	This school provides adequate access to technology for staff who serve students with IEPs.	9.23
3.20	This school has good communication with district personnel to support students with IEPs.	9.24
3.21	This school offers adequate benefits (e.g., salary, fringe and retirement options) to support my continued employment at the school.	9.25
3.22	This school views service to students with IEPs as a shared responsibility among all staff.	9.12
3.23	This school has sufficient resources to support special education programs and services.	9.18

	Question	Report Table
3.24	This school promotes personnel participation in decision-making that affects school practices and policies.	9.13

*This question was made part of a series on professional development in 2009. The corresponding results are reported in Table 3.10.

Appendix B: Executive Summary 2004-06 Statewide CSCS Report[111]

This report summarizes the first two years of data (2004-06) collected from teachers, administrators, and other staff by the California Department of Education's on-line *California School Climate Survey* (CSCS). Districts administer the survey to school staff (grades 5 and above) every two years along with the companion *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CHKS) administered to students in the same schools. The main purposes of the survey are to:

- Fulfill the requirement of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 that schools conduct an anonymous teacher survey of the incidence, prevalence, and attitudes related to drug use and violence; and
- Collect data to help (a) guide local school improvement efforts; (b) promote the successful cognitive, social, and emotional development of all the state's youth; and (c) close the race/ethnicity achievement gap.

The CSCS gathers information from school staff that, in conjunction with CHKS, enriches a school's ability to foster a positive learning and teaching environment that promotes student achievement *and* well-being.

Because the schools in this report were not selected to be representative of the state, and many had low staff participation rates, the findings must be considered preliminary. Nevertheless, the data were derived from 67,901 staff in 4,136 schools in 535 districts across the state — making this the largest study ever conducted of staff *perceptions* of school climate in California. Although staff perceptions may differ from those of an independent observer, they reflect a reality that is important to understand and that can influence both staff and student performance. Schools need to compare CSCS and CHKS data to determine the degree of convergence (or divergence) between staff and student perceptions.

Differences Among Traditional Schools. In comparing traditional (comprehensive) elementary, middle, and high schools, four overall findings stand out:

- There is a consistent decline from elementary to high school across indicators of a positive learning *and* teaching environment (e.g., caring staff-student relations, achievement standards and expectations, and meaningful student participation in school).
- There is a concomitant decline in indicators of student motivation to learn, attendance, and other behaviors that facilitate learning.
- There is a dramatic increase from elementary to high school in the perceived severity of problems that the schools experience related to student risk behaviors, health, and safety (e.g., substance use, vandalism, theft, weapons possession, violence, gang activity). Conversely, perceived school safety dramatically declines.
- In stark contrast to this pattern of increasing challenges, there is a marked decline from elementary to high school in services and policies that address the behavioral and health problems students experience and that form barriers to learning.

School Climate and Academic Achievement. Across school types, there was a strong association at the school level between positive school climate factors and student academic performance, as measured by the Academic

111 Austin, G., and Bailey, J. (2008). What teachers and other staff tell us about California Schools: Statewide results of the 2004-06 California School Climate Survey (San Francisco: WestEd). Available to download at: www.wested.org/cscs {CK

Performance Index. As average school API scores increased, so did the percentage of schools that were categorized as having high levels (most positive) on summary scales assessing School Norms and Standards, Staff-Student Relationships, Student Behaviors that Facilitate Learning, School Safety (including lack of violence and victimization), and Substance Use (low problem levels). However, the percentage of schools scoring high on an overall Positive Learning and Working Environment scale did not reach half for elementary schools (47%), declined to 28% for middle schools, and reached only 18% for high schools.

The Need for High School Reform. The findings highlight the need for high school reform, revealing not only the challenges high schools face, but also their need to better address those challenges. For example:

- Less than half of high school staff felt most or nearly all students were motivated to learn. Only 40% strongly agreed their high school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn.
- Only about one-third strongly agreed that nearly all adults at the school really care about students, and that their high school sets high standards for academic performance, promotes academic success for all students, is a safe place for students, and is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work.
- Only about one-quarter reported nearly all adults believe every student can be a success and feel a responsibility to improve the school.
- The nonacademic barriers to learning that high schools report are formidable. Around half reported that student truancy, disruptive behavior, and alcohol and drug use are moderate-to-severe problems for the school. Thirty to forty percent similarly identified student harassment, vandalism, theft, depression, gang activity, and racial/ethnic conflict.
- Yet only about one-quarter to one-fifth of respondents strongly agreed that their school provided adequate counseling and effective behavioral referral services, had sufficient resources for safety, and handled discipline and behavior problems effectively. Only about one-tenth strongly agreed that the school had sufficient substance use prevention resources and provided adequate professional development regarding the social, emotional, and developmental needs of youth.

Continuation Schools. More staff at continuation high schools than at traditional high schools perceived their schools as having positive learning and teaching environments. They also reported that continuation schools provided more learning supports to meet greater student needs. But the sufficiency of these efforts is also called into question, given the high level of student problems reported by CS staff – problems continuation schools inherited at least in part because services and supports are even lower in the traditional school system.

Staff Working Conditions. Improving school climates for students requires improving climates for staff as well. Only about one-third to one-half of staff (again, with the lowest percentage in high schools) strongly agreed that their school was a supportive and inviting place to work.

Conclusion. Overall, CSCS staff data indicate that as students age and the barriers to learning that both schools and students face begin climbing, traditional schools have increasingly less positive climates for both students and staff. They are perceived as becoming less caring, less supportive, and less fair; as having lower academic standards, norms, and expectations; and providing fewer services and programs to address student health and behavioral problems that impede learning, especially violence and substance use.

In order to serve both these frustrated staff and their students, efforts to improve low-performing schools, especially high schools, need to not only address issues of curriculum, instruction, and governance, but also to foster positive school environments that engage students in learning and provide the kinds of supports that reduce the health and behavioral problems which, in turn, impede students' readiness and ability to receive the benefits of instructional improvements.